WASHINGTON AND ITS ROMANCE

by Thomas Nelson Page

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WASHINGTON
AND ITS ROMANCE

Books by Thomas Nelson Page

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Washington and Its Romance

ROCK CREEK
IN OLDEN DAYS

PRESENTATION COPY

WASHINGTON AND ITS ROMANCE

by Thomas Nelson Page

ILLUSTRATED by WALTER O. & EMILY SHAW REESE

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INTRODUCTORY

From Babel down a certain romance appears to attach to the rising of capitals.

On through the years in which to the music of Apollo's lute, great "Ilion, like a mist, rose into towers"; on through those when Dido encircled the Bursa with the Bull's Hide; and those in which Rome sprang on her Seven Hills above the She-wolf's Den, down to the founding of Washington, hovers something of this romance.

The capitals of most countries are the especial pride of their people. It is not so with us—at least, it has not been so in the past. Happily, it appears as though this condition were changing. It has, indeed, ever appeared to me strange that Americans know so little of and care so little for the capital of their own country. Nature, prodigal of gracious slope and curve and tone, has endowed it with, perhaps, more charm than any other national capital—at least, than any large European capital—and its founders laid it off on a generous plan which has left the opportunity of furthering what

Nature presented, in a way to appeal to the pride of our people. Yet how large a proportion of Americans turn their eyes and their steps, not toward its majestic buildings, but to some foreign capital with its gaudy shops and commercial allurements, returning with an alien's ideas on many subjects and boasting of beauties which are not comparable to those of our own capital city.

Not long since, in a club in our chief commercial city, a group of gentlemen were discussing foreign cities with the familiarity of regular habitués, and a provincial visitor from a small territory on the banks of the Potomac suggested that in the spring, at least, Washington might vie with any capital that he had ever seen.

"I have never been to Washington," said a member of the club, who was an annual visitor to nearly every European capital, and had, indeed, a familiarity with them second only to his familiarity with his native city.

"You mean that you have never visited Washington?"

"No! I have passed through Washington frequently going back and forth to Florida or some other Southern winter resort, but I have never spent an hour there."

"Come with me to-night, man, and see the most

beautiful city in the world!" exclaimed his guest, gathering courage.

But he did not go.

Washington with its noble buildings; its charming parks; its sunlit stretches and shady avenues; its majestic monument bathed now in the sunshine, now reflecting the moonlight, now towering amid the clouds, meant nothing to him. Washington and its charming society, its cosmopolitan flavour; its interesting circles, social, political, scientific, artistic, diplomatic, meant nothing to him. Why was it?

"I have never been able to read a history of the United States," said one, not long since. "It is so dull." Is this the answer? Has the history of Washington been too dull to interest our people? "Happy that people whose annals are dull!"

Washington has a unique life, though how long it will remain so, no one can tell. Fresh with the beauty of youth, situated at the pleasant mean between the extremes of heat and cold, possessing a climate which throughout the greater portion of the year admits of the only proper life—life in the open air, with sunshine as sparkling and skies as blue as Italy's—it presents, according to one's wishes, political, scientific, and social life, and soon it will offer a literary and artistic life,

which, second to none in the New World, may possibly, in no long time, be equal to that of any in the whole world. In Washington one may, according to taste, hear discussed the most advanced theories of science in every field, the political news of every country and enjoy a society as simple, cultured, and refined—or, if one prefers it, as pretentious, as empty and diverting—as in any capital of the globe.

It has a social life, if not as brilliant, at least as agreeable as that of any other national capital.

Commerce, we are assured by those interested in it, covers as wide if not as extensive a field as in any other metropolis, and we are promised soon an increase of manufacture, so that those who love it need not despair of having in time substituted for our present pure and uncontaminated air as filthy an atmosphere as that of the greatest manufacturing city in the country. As to the spirit which produces this, we already have that in abundance.

In fact, Washington naturally demands consideration from every standpoint. Historically, politically, and socially, it is a field for the investigator, the student, the lounger. And he will be hard to please who cannot find in its various and diverse activities as many varied objects of pursuit as he will find in the varied scenes

amid its elegant avenues, lined with trees of every kind and variety.

Crossing the Potomac in a railway train, not long ago, as it reached the Washington side, with its broad green park along the river, bathed in the sunshine, with the White House beyond on one side, and the noble dome of the capitol on the other, while above the whole, towered the noble shaft of Washington—a splendid bar of snowy marble reaching to the heavens—a traveller exclaimed to the strangers about him, "What a wonderful city this will be fifty years from now. Think what the people who will come here then will see!"

"What a wonderful city it is now!" replied another. "Think what we see. You may travel the world over and see nothing like this. More splendid cities perhaps, but none so beautiful and charming." And he was right. Fifty years ago, travellers from abroad returned home with lurid accounts of slave auctions and highwaymen; with impressions of mud-holes and squalor and mediæval barbarism. Travellers from all over the world go home to-day with impressions of a capital city set in a park, still unfinished, yet endowed by Nature with beauties which centuries of care would not equal and beginning to show the greatness which, designed by the founders of its plan, has, though often

retarded by folly, been promoted from time to time by the far-sightedness of some of the great statesmen and by the genius of some of the great artists of our generation. Yet, even fifty years ago, the place must have had a beauty of its own, a beauty of trees and gracious slopes, which must have appealed to those who, unlike Mammon, were willing to lift their eyes from the pavements to the skies.

The capitol and the White House, the Treasury and the old Patent Office, stood then, as now, gleaming in the sunshine, with their beautiful proportions speaking of the genius of a race of architect-artists whose successors had not yet appeared; the gracious mansions lying in the part of the city to the southwest of the White House and crowning the heights of Georgetown, amid their noble groves, must already have given Washington a charm which made it worthy to be the capital of the nation; while below, the Potomac on its course to the sea, as though resting from the turmoil of its rapids, spread in a silvery lake which has no counterpart in the precincts of any capital of the world.

There is an ancient and honourable society in Washington known socially as the "Cave Dwellers," of whom more anon.

One who is familiar with Washington must recognize

that to establish his title to speak of it with authority, he must go back a considerable distance. In the outset, therefore, I would say, if my right to speak of it be questioned, that in this history, I could an I would go back to the time of the "Mesozoic," when, to quote an eminent authority, "the bird was but newly born of the reptile and the mammal of the fish, under the miscegenation of evolution," when "not only was the Colorado un-born; but when the foundations in which it has carved its colossal bed were not yet laid down." But as to this, I shall refer my questioners to Dr. W. J. McGee's interesting paper on the geologic antecedents of man in the Potomac Valley, and declare only on his authority that even in that age, the Blue Ridge towered higher than to-day on its mountain bases; the Potomac flowed near its present course, and has, indeed, given to "this episode" of cutting down the mountains and building up the lowlands through this period, its own name of the "Potomac Formation"; that during later eons, the mountains were cut down by the rivers, the ever energetic Potomac carrying away whole cubic miles of sand and mud into the ocean to build the broad bench of lowland stretching from Washington to the Coast, "and thus gradually the growing Continent rose until even the pebbly beach of the

middle Mesozoic became an upland, and most of its pebbles were swept away, only remnants being left to crown the river bluffs and divides."

I shall not attempt to tell of the "Second Episode," so interesting to the archæologist of the Potomac Valley; but shall still refer to the same authority for the history of the period when "the previously mild climate chilled, the winters lengthened," when "a continuous mantle of ice swept down from the North"; when "the land sank until the ocean waters crept up the slopes flanking the Chesapeake and Potomac and finally swept over the hills among which the National Capitol is now embosomed"; when "the water level stood at 150, at 200, at 300 feet above the present tide-level and the ice-charged Potomac dropped boulders and mud within its expanded estuary, while the waves built terraces above the hill-tops." I shall not even undertake to go back to the more recent aboriginal history of the region where the federal capitol was finally established, on the site of a capitol of a civilization of fishermen, hunters, and warriors, existing long before John Smith, in the summer of 1608, with his fourteen companions, ascended the "Potowmack" in an open boat, and found on the shores where now the capitol rises in its beauty, villages surrounded

with cornfields and teeming with life. I shall only say that the explorer in this field will find that all along the Potomac Valley are the evidences to show that man existed here from the paleolithic age, and that eons before this prehistoric advent the region was alternately swept by the sea and the ice.

Along the Potomac banks, along the Anacostia and the Piney Branch, are the abundant proofs today, in hand-broken flints and stones, of the people that for ages lived their wild life in this valley, long before any city that has a surviving name had been reared on the globe.

When John Smith ascended the river, he found that Powhatan's sway extended even this far; but that it was weakened on his confines was shown by the fact that, while lower down Potomac explorers had met with a hostile reception from the "grim and stout savages" who, they reported, "boldly demanded what we were and what we would, above at Moyaones, Nacotchtant, and Toags, the people did their best to content us."

Now "Toags," which appears on Smith's map as "Tauxanent," was at or near "Mt. Vernon," "Moyaones" appears from the same map to have been directly opposite on the Maryland side, just below the mouth of the Piscataway, while "Nacotchtant," or

"Nacochtant," was on the same side just below the Eastern Branch, and within the present limits of the District. It stood where Benning's is now.[1]

Nacotchtant was the residence of a chief and contained eighty warriors. They were of the Algonquin stock and spoke the language of the Powhatan Confederacy, from the Albemarle Sound to the Potomac.

The Jesuits who came over with Lord Baltimore in 1634 latinized the name of Anacostan, from which we get Anacostia—the name of the Eastern Branch of the Potomac, and also Analostan Island, opposite Georgetown.

"Their houses," says John Smith, "are in the midst of their fields or gardens, which are small plots of ground —some 20 acres, some 40 acres, some 100 acres, some more, some less, sometimes from 2 to 100 of these houses together or but little separated by groves of trees. Near their habitation is but little wood or old trees on the ground; by reason of their burning them for fire." This touch of cutting down the trees is that

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[1] The other villages identified as in the District bounds were: 1, Red Bank, on the west side of the Anacostia, southeast of the Reform School; 2, The Carrol Place in Washington, north of Garfield Park, and between First and Second Streets, Southeast; 3, The crest of the hill on the Virginia side of the Potomac at Chain Bridge; 4, Opposite the foot of Analostan Island on the Virginia shore; 5, Near the mouth of Four-mile Run, Va.; 6, On the farm of Isaac Crossman, at Falls Church, Va.; 7, "Namaranghgnena," at the south end of Long Bridge; while a workshop of paleolithic man is on the north side of Piney Branch, below Fourteenth Street, extending to Rock Creek.

which binds the ancient capital of the Algonquins to the modern capital of the Anglo-Saxons. Would that there were as worthy a motive in the latter case as in the former for the destruction of the beautiful forests along the Potomac!

We shall see, as we proceed further with the history of Washington, that the tree-cutting disease has raged with unabated virulence from that time to this, and in every step of its development the lament has gone up over the destruction of the beautiful forests and groves which once were the glory of this valley.

Jefferson, last of all men to crave unlimited power, once declared in his ire that he wished that he were a despot, so that he might visit swift punishment upon the miscreants who so ruthlessly destroyed the trees that without reason were felled on all sides.

This spirit of vandalism had at times extended with disastrous force even to the destruction of the shrubbery in the parks. A score of years ago, some of the little parks in Washington were, with their flowering shrubs, bowers of beauty, not excelled by the Gardens of Oxford or the Backs of Cambridge. The greatest landscape architect possibly that the country has produced declared his happiness in having lived to see the western slope of Capitol Hill attain such beauty as then

existed. They were all destroyed, as it were, in a day, by the order of a worthy and earnest official who sincerely believed that he was doing the State a service by this destruction.

Other early English visitors to the site of the capital of the nation were those composing an expedition of twenty-six men who, under Henry Spelman early in 1623, adventured in a pinnace belonging to John Pountis (or Poynts) up the river to trade for beaver and corn with the Anacostan Indian bands between Potomac Creek and the falls of the Potomac.

Leaving five men on board the boat, the others, presuming on the friendship of the Indians, landed at a point believed to be near the old mouth of the Tiber Creek, below Observation Hill. While they were absent the Indians in canoes surrounded the little vessel and proceeded to clamber aboard, when one of the sailors at random fired a cannon, which so frightened the boarding party that they all jumped overboard. A simultaneous attack appears to have been made on the men who landed, as the sailors left on board reported that they had heard the noise of conflict and saw a man's head roll down the bank, whereupon they weighed anchor and sailed to Jamestown.

Spelman was among the slain and Captain Henry

Fleet was taken prisoner. Several years later, Fleet was ransomed and returned to England, where his long association with the Indians and his knowledge of their language recommended him to the London merchants as a valuable interpreter and agent. Their interest in him was doubtless quickened by the stories he told.

A letter written of him states that "he reputeth that he hath often times been within sight of the South Sea; he hath seen Indians besprinkle their paintings with powder of gold; and that he hath likewise seen plenty of rare and precious stones among them, and plenty of black fox, which of all others is the richest fur."[1]

This is interesting in connection with the history of this region; for he was the first Englishman who ever resided for any length of time where Washington now stands.

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[1]Later on we find him in trouble in England for having "restrained" his ship the *Barque Warwicke*. But yet later he appears to have been reinstated, at least in Virginia; for not only in October, 1644, do we find him invited to be at Jamestown at a meeting of the General Court to give advice as to an expedition against the Rappahannock Indians, and, in 1645, now with the title of Captain, sent to "trade with the Rappahannocks or any others not in amity with Opechancanough, but the following year we find him engaged in commanding an expedition sent out from Kiquotan, Hampton, to conquer a peace with Opechancanough." (Neill's "Virginia Carolorum," p. 189.)

In 1652 he is authorized with Col. William Claiborne "to discover and enjoy such benefits, and trades, for fourteen years as they shall find out in places where no English have ever been and discovered, nor have had particular trade, and to take up such lands by patents proving their rights, as they shall think good."

His memory is still perpetuated by "Fleet's Point" near the mouth of the Potomac, where he kept a house of entertainment, from which he not only turned out

He appears to have been entrusted with the command of more than one boat and to have done considerable trading with the Anacostan Indians.

For the first account of the region of Washington, we are, however, indebted to Fleet himself. It appears that he had in 1631 "come in a bark called the *Warwicke*," from Massachusetts Bay into the Potomac and Chesapeake, for the purpose of obtaining a "cargo of corn" for the hard-pushed settlers in that colony, and had ascended the river as far as Yowaccomoco, where St. Mary's, the first capital of Maryland, was placed. "Here," he says, "I was tempted to run up the river to the heads, there to trade with a strange, populous nation called the Mohawks (man-eaters). After good deliberation I conceived many inconveniences that might fall out."

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two of his guests for scandalous behaviour, but had them presented to the Court, and had the woman given thirty lashes.

A little later we find his name connected with this region in an account given by Father White, a Jesuit Father who accompanied the first expedition which settled Maryland. Of the Potomac River which they, with pious intent, made, "St. Gregories," the Father said that "this is the sweetest and greatest river that I have ever seene, so that the Thames is but a little finger beside it." He further relates how Governor Leonard Calvert after having visited the King at Patomecke Towne went up to visit the Emperor at Piscataway (which is in the southwest corner of St. George's County, Md.), with a view to arranging a settlement of his colony. In this journey, says the good Father, "our Governor took Captain Henrie Fleet and his three barks, who had been a fire-brand to inflame the Indians against us."

Fleet, according to the account, "accepted of a proportion in our beaver trade for to serve 'My Lord' etc., until having talked with Claiborne, another of our chief enemies, he revolted" and "traded again without leave."

The chief one appears to have been the need of securing his cargo of corn. Proceeding, he describes his going up the Potomac River in 1632, after beaver skins, and finding that a certain Captain Harmon had been ahead of him and had obtained all the skins in that region. Ascending the river, however, he obtained 114 skins from the Emperor; yet this, he states, "was nothing in regard to the great charge at his town and at a little town, by him called the 'Nacostines.' (Anacostans). There is but little friendship between the Emperor and the Nacostines, he being afraid to punish them, because they are protected by the Massomeckes, or Cannyda Indians." "The Nacostines," he continues, "before here occasioned the killing of 20 men of our English, myself being then taken prisoner and detained for five years, which was in the time of Sir Francis Wyatt." (Governor of Virginia, 1621–1626.)

The Massomeckes alluded to appear to have been a populous and powerful tribe about the upper reaches of the Potomac River; for Fleet states that his brother, whom he sent to them, was seven days going to the Falls from their town, and five days returning. Fleet states himself that he had come to anchor about two leagues below the Falls at a point, of which he states:

This place without all question is the most pleasant and healthful place in this country for habitation, the air temperate in Summer and not violent in Winter. It aboundeth in all manner of fish. The Indians in one night will catch 30 sturgeon in a place where the river is not above 12 fathom broad. And as for deer, buffaloes, bears, turkeys, the woods do swarm with them and the soil is exceedingly fertile; but above this place the country is rocky and mountainous like Cannida.[1]

Following the expeditions of Fleet some forty years, a number of emigrants, mainly from Scotland and Ireland, established a settlement on the north bank of the Potomac, within the present limits of the city of Washington.

Documents relating to three tracts of land, all lying within the boundary of the city, are said to have come down to the present time. One of these, bearing the date of June 5, 1663, relates to a tract which embraces what is now Capitol Hill. The settler who occupied this tract was named Francis Pope, and it is said that with some humour he gave to his plantation the name of Rome, and to the little stream which wound around the western base of the hill, he gave the name Tiber Creek. However this may have been, Tiber was the name by which this little stream was long "called and

[1] "A Brief Journal of a Voyage in the *Barque Warwicke* to Virginia," by Henry Fleet. (Neill's "Colonization of America," pp. 221–28.)

known." And the stream is celebrated by this name in Tom Moore's line:

And what was Goose Creek then, is Tiber now.

Another of these documents of the same date refers to a tract laid out for Captain Robert Troop and named "Scotland Yard," which is believed to be the land now comprising the southeastern part of the city.

The third document bears the date 1681 and refers to a tract owned by William Lang, called the "Widow's Mite." On maps made later this is laid down as embracing the part of the present city lying generally west of Eighteenth Street.

From this time on, for two centuries, the history of this region is like that of the whole valley of the Potomac and all the neighbouring country. The Anglo-Saxon race, having obtained gradually their power, and extended their sway up all the rivers that flowed from the western mountains, then took in all the regions between them, until in the middle of the latter half of the eighteenth century they met the Latin races along the banks of the Ohio and the Mississippi. Here they waited for a brief space, and then with a bound they reached the Pacific. In this period the banks of the Potomac had been settled on both sides, and where the Indian wigwams had stood, villages

arose, and the hunting grounds of the Powhatans were transformed into fields of tobacco and corn. The head of navigation on the Potomac had ever been a favourite rendezvous; the fish abounding in the rivers, and the wild fowl which covered the waters had drawn the Indian there and had continued to draw the Saxon, until several towns and hamlets arose on the site of the ancient Indian villages.

On the Virginia side a settlement was established in 1669 by one Captain Robert Howson, who, with a view to planting there 120 colonists, obtained from Governor Berkeley a grant of 6,600 acres extending along the Potomac from Indian Cabin Creek (Hunting Creek), to a point opposite "My Lord's Island"—now Analostan. Captain Howson, however, immediately sold out his grant to John Alexander, a settler in Stafford County in the Northern Neck, the consideration being 6,600 pounds of tobacco and "some money." It was Alexander who first planted a colony on this part of the Potomac, the first settlement being made on Pierson's Island (Daingerfield Island). This was soon followed by a settlement at Jones' Point. In 1691 Alexander died and left his property to his sons, whose descendants exploited it and still occupy portions of it.

In 1730 a public tobacco warehouse was established

at Pierson's Island (near the present gas works) and here arose the village of Belhaven, with its single street named Oronoco, from the famous tobacco which was its chief staple.

In 1748 this became, from the name of its principal owners, under the authority of the Colonial Assembly of Virginia, the Town of Alexandria. Fairfaxes, Alexanders, Carlyles, and Washingtons, among others, were appointed by this act of the General Assembly directors and trustees for "designating, building, and carrying on, and maintaining the Town of Alexandria," to "expand or supersede Belhaven."

Among those who helped to survey the lands platted in lots for the new town was a youth of seventeen, a brother of one of the trustees. His name was George Washington.

The town was organized with John West as Clerk and had nine streets and two public landings, one of which was at the present Fish-Town Wharf and the other at the foot of Duke Street. It had also, a little later, markets and fairs, and soon developed into a place of marked commercial importance, which for a considerable period bade fair to be one of the great cities of the country, and, lying at the head of deep-water communication, might have become so but for the discovery of steam,

that new power which upset all calculations, changed the sites of cities, and controlled the commerce of the world.

It was here that Braddock on April 3, 1755, landed his troops to start on his ill-fated expedition against the French, and here in the Carlyle House, built ten years before by John Carlyle, one of the trustees of the town, he held a conference with the governors of the neighbouring colonies, Dinwiddie, Sharp, Delaney, and Morris; a conference out of which grew later large consequences, including one which was to bear in the future rich fruit, known as the United States.

While young Captain Washington waited here with the Virginia Rangers for arrival of the British transports, an episode occurred which throws a shining light on his future career.

During his sojourn in the town a heated election contest was going on between Mr. Fairfax, who was his friend and neighbour, and Mr. Payne, and at the polls in the market-house square an altercation took place between Captain Washington and Mr. Payne. The details are not known, but Payne knocked Washington down, and it is related that Washington's troops would have made short work of his opponent but for Washington himself.

It was supposed that the result of the collision would necessarily be a duel, but it is reported that the next

morning the young officer sent for Payne and offered him the amend, saying, "Mr. Payne, to err is human. I was wrong yesterday, but if you have had sufficient satisfaction, let us be friends." It is not surprising to learn that Payne was ever afterward the young officer's devoted friend and supporter.

On both sides of the river were laid out in time fine plantations, owned and occupied by the gentry of the region. Such, for example, on the Virginia side as Mount Vernon, destined to become the shrine of all lovers of Virtue and of Liberty; Gunston Hall, George Mason's home; while, later on, higher up the river, arose the dignified mansion of Arlington.

On the Maryland side were such noted plantations as Mount Airy, near Bladensburg; Notley Hall; and Duddington Manor, occupying a portion of what was afterward to become Capitol Hill.

In time, too, there sprang here a town to rival Alexandria.

On the Maryland side, Georgetown spread over the hills in the northwest angle of the Potomac and Rock Creek, and Carrollsburgh in the angle of the main stream and the Eastern Branch, or the Anacostia, rose below. Well-to-do planters, many of them canny Scots, built their mansions on the hills overlooking the low grounds,

and their plantations stretched from the water-side back beyond the heights that enclosed the valley. The highway from the north to the south crossed the Potomac here. Deep water offered facility of traffic to the whole coast of the country and, to the adventurous, even to the lands beyond the sea. It was the dream of the dreamers that communications should be extended to the westward also, and long before a city arose on the banks of the Potomac it had been suggested that the waters of that river should be united with the waters of the Ohio. It was, at least in part, due to this dream finally that selection of this spot was made for the capital of the country.

Georgetown was laid out by the authority of the General Assembly of the Colony of Maryland in 1751, though it was not incorporated until thirty-eight years later. Like its opposite neighbour Alexandria, a few miles lower down the river, it soon became a prosperous and thriving town. Lying at the very head of the deep-water navigation and with plans already conceived to unite by means of a canal and a system of locks the tide water with the far waters of the Ohio, and with a fine water power at its feet, it possessed advantages over not only Alexandria, but over almost every other city of the country.

Its name is said to have been derived from the second

George of the House of Hanover, though one tradition avers that it was at first called George's town from George Beall, the son of Ninian Beall, who first laid off a town at this spot on part of the plantation known as the Rock of Dumbarton.

Owing to the advantages referred to, it had, at the time that the site of the new capital was determined on, attained considerable importance, and, it is said, had between five and six thousand inhabitants. On the range of the hills above it, known as Georgetown Heights, embowered amid groves of noble trees, were many handsome and charming villas, occupied by the gentry of that region.

It was here that the plans for the new city a mile or two to the eastward were matured, and at one time it was proposed that Georgetown itself should be comprehended within the limits of the latter.

Sir Augustus Foster, an attaché of the British Legation from 1804 to 1806 in Mr. Jefferson's administration, after his return home wrote later an account of Washington during his brief stay in the young capital, in which he states that he was sure that in that locality there were "five hundred persons possessing estates which return them an income of £1000."

[It had been Mr. Page's plan to add to his description of old Washington a similar account of the new Washington, but this intention he did not succeed in carrying out before his death.]

WASHINGTON
AND ITS ROMANCE

WASHINGTON AND ITS ROMANCE

CHAPTER I

HOW WASHINGTON CAME TO BE SELECTED

IN the early summer of 1783, the Continental Congress sat in the city of Philadelphia, happy in the belief that the war was over; that America was free; that a new government based upon representation of the people had been established, as they believed for all time, and that peace had come to spread its beneficent blessing, on the land they had made so many sacrifices for. Their presence in Philadelphia was a satisfactory proof of their triumph; for out of that city in which the Liberty Bell had first rung its peal of joy at the Declaration of Freedom, they had been hunted by the British, breathing threatenings and slaughter against the traitors, and for a period, little more than fugitives, had been fain to hold their sessions wherever they could assemble beyond the danger of British bayonets, and possibly British halters. At the approach of the enemy in September, 1777, they had retired hastily to Lan-

caster, Pa., and had adjourned from there to Yorktown, Va., where they sat from September to the end of June, 1778, when they were enabled to return to Philadelphia.

It is true that many difficult and some novel questions were upon them; many dangers loomed before them. Greed and selfishness and private ambition awoke anew now that the common danger which had drawn them together was past; conflicting interests and divergent views made themselves felt as they had not done so long as extreme peril had united them with its common bond. They were nearly, if not quite, bankrupt, and, with the new situation, a new and wholly untried field lay before them. But they had overcome the chief danger which impended when the British made overtures of peace.

Chief among the difficulties were the questions of finance, and the ever increasing rivalries and dissensions of the several states. The first had brought to them absolute insolvency; the latter had effectively reduced the power of the Congress and prevented their taking the action necessary for even their own continued existence. For years the Treasury had been empty; the Army had been starving; the states had been deaf or dilatory to the appeals made to them, and the

issue had hung in the balance. When the ragged soldiery clamoured for their pay, Robert Morris lamented that he had not even paper to pay them with.

Happily, over all lay the benign light of one great name and character—Washington. His genius had been equal to every emergency—and he had, under the providence of God, conducted affairs to a completely successful issue. But for him the Revolution must have collapsed long before. No more impressive lesson of the power of one man exists in history than is to be found in Washington's letters relating to the constituency and subsistence of his army. Valley Forge is only an incident in the unbroken story of misfortune, inefficiency, and suffering. For months at a time, the troops had not been paid; they were never properly clothed or fed, and the "ragged Continentals" had become a by-word. The system of calling on the states for supplies for their own troops was ineffective and pernicious, never meeting the demand properly, and when it did so, breeding jealousy and discontent. Patriotic men like Thomas Nelson, Jr., and Robert Morris pledged their large fortunes to make good the deficiency, only to have them swept away in the vortex; but even so, again and again the troops were in mutiny; their natural resentment being increased by

the enemy who, being properly informed of their condition, disseminated seditious literature among them with only too successful results. Some Connecticut regiments broke out in a mutiny which was suppressed only with difficulty by the judicious behaviour of their officers. When, in 1780, the Pennsylvania line at Morristown mutinied, shot down some of its officers, and marched toward Philadelphia to demand redress of its injuries, "Washington was fain to send Wayne after them to draw out their grievances; bring them to a negotiation, and promise a full representation to Congress and the State." The insurrection spread, and a little later the New Jersey men also mutinied. Washington was now ready. He ordered out troops, surrounded the mutineers, awed them into submission, and executed two of the principal actors on the spot.[1]

In 1782, as Washington wrote to Morris, they were on the eve of a general mutiny when the vigilance of the officers discovered it a few hours before they were to parade and the ringleaders were tried and executed. "Minds soured by distress, are," he says, "easily rankled." In truth the army had real grievances, as Washington himself declared. And on the eve of

[1] Ford's "Washington," vol. II, p. 86.

being disbanded, they demanded assurance for at least a small part of the money due them. They demanded one month's pay in hand, and a reasonable assurance that they would receive two months' further pay in a short time. Morris, when appealed to, declared that he had "not even paper to pay," and he issued his own notes payable in six months and asked the states to receive them for taxes. Washington himself took an earnest part in the matter and appealed to both Congress and the federal states, addressing to them in a circular letter one of those calm, sane, wise appeals which are in their simple statement the best presentation of a case.

The troops themselves had presented a memorial to the Congress, couched in terms respectful enough, asking redress for their grievances; but nothing had come of it, simply because nothing could come: the Congress had no means to meet their wishes.

In April, 1783, while the temper of the troops was in a state of exasperation, a seditious handbill was distributed among those quartered at Newburg, setting forth their wrongs in vivid terms and calling on them to assert their rights. So threatening became the situation that Washington felt himself called upon to address the troops hotly and repudiate the idea that a

soldier could have written so inflammatory and so unsoldierly a paper.

The author was a soldier, Major John Armstrong, who later took much pride in his achievement. But the storm passed and the troops returned to their duty. And Washington continued his labours on their behalf.

The existence of the army without pay and without prospect of pay was such as to cause grave embarrassment to the country. Provisional articles of peace had been adopted, but a definitive treaty had not yet been signed, and the question was whether the Army should be disbanded, or whether the Commander-in-Chief should be authorized to grant furloughs to the men enlisted to serve during the war. On the 26th of May, 1783, the latter course was determined on by Congress, but the situation was an unhappy one. Mr. Madison, in writing to a friend, said, "Without money there is some reason to surmise that it may be as difficult to disband an army as it has been to raise one."[1]

Little came of it at the moment; for the people thought that the war was over and had plunged into politics—the struggle had begun between the states and the Central Government. Most of the veterans

[1] Rives's "Life and Times of Madison," vol. I, p. 480.

had gone home with only their furloughs to show for their service, and their places had been supplied in part by the new Pennsylvania levies. Such was the situation when, the war having ceased, the Congress in Philadelphia, having sent out a notification of the cessation of hostilities, set about preparing for peace. It all has to do with the history of Washington City, for the location of the capital here was in some sort due to a mutiny.

The Congress had already begun to discuss the advisability of establishing for themselves a permanent place of residence. The states of Maryland and New York had, in contemplation of this, passed Acts offering to cede respectively to Congress for their permanent residence the City of Annapolis and the Town of Kingston. And on the 4th of June, Congress had entered an order setting the fourth Monday in October for the consideration of these offers, and so notified the executives of New York and Maryland. Philadelphia was not behindhand with her claims and her inducements. Surely they must have thought that peace had come to abide. From this dream they were rudely awakened.

One pleasant summer morning (June 17th), a letter was received by Congress from Col. R. Butler, stationed

at Lancaster, Pa., stating that a detachment of about eighty mutineers had broken bounds and were marching on Philadelphia to arouse the troops in the barracks there and demand their pay at the hands of Congress. This was serious, for the troops in the barracks at Philadelphia needed no arousing—they were already on the verge of mutiny, and had a few days before, on the 13th of June, addressed through a board of non-commissioned officers an insolent letter to the Congress, setting forth their claims and demanding a satisfactory answer in the course of the day, with a threat otherwise of taking measures to right themselves! Still, that the situation could be handled readily, no one doubted. There were with Congress as brave men as ever faced a musket, and men who had often faced one. Among them was Washington's favourite aide, the daring young officer who had but a short while before led the storming party against Cornwallis's redoubts at Yorktown.

The matter was accordingly referred to a committee consisting of Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Ellsworth, and Mr. Peters, who were instructed to confer with the Supreme Council of Pennsylvania.

Two days later the committee reported verbally and on the next day reported in writing that they had had

a conference with the Supreme Council and had proposed "the propriety of calling out a detachment of militia to intercept the mutineers on their march from Lancaster," to prevent their joining the troops at Philadelphia who, it was apprehended, would be ready to make common cause with those on their march with mutinous purposes; that the Council having shown a reluctance to call out any part of the militia, expressing the opinion that they would not be willing to act until some outrage should have been committed by the troops, there appeared "no alternative but to endeavor to dissuade the mutineers from coming to town; and if they failed in that attempt, to make use of expedients to prevent the troops in the barracks from joining in any excesses, and to induce the detachment from Lancaster to return to that place." They further reported that they had sent the Assistant Secretary of War (Major Jackson) to meet the detachment and to endeavour to "engage them to return to the former place," but the said detachment had proceeded in their intention and had arrived in the city that morning.

The instructions to Major Jackson were attached to the report. They directed him to proceed to meet the mutineers "and to endeavor by every prudent method to engage them to return to the post which they have

left" and they included promises to permit them to remain in service till their accounts should have been settled, if they preferred that to being furloughed. The instructions continued:

> You will represent to them, with coolness but energy, the impropriety of such proceedings and of the danger they will be running by persisting in an improper conduct. You will assure them of the best intentions of Congress to do them justice and of the absurdity of their expecting to procure it more effectually by intemperate proceedings. You will point out to them the tendency which such proceedings will have to raise the resentments of their country and to indispose it to take effectual measures for their relief. In short, you will urge every consideration in your power to induce them to return. . . . If they persist in coming to town, you will give the earliest notice of their progress and disposition.

It is a proof of the gravity of the situation which had suddenly arisen that this mild protest should have been signed by Alexander Hamilton.

This delicate mode of meeting the mutineers had, as stated, no effect, and the following day, the 21st, the Lancaster mutineers with their numbers augmented by those from the Philadelphia barracks "presented themselves drawn up in the street before the State House where the Congress had assembled."

Mr. Madison, in his "Diary of the Proceedings of

Congress," has given an account of the occurrence. He says:

The Executive Council of the State sitting under the same roof was called on for proper interposition. President Dickinson came in and explained the difficulty under actual circumstances of bringing out the militia of the place for the suppression of the mutiny. He thought that without some outrages on persons and property, the militia could not be relied on. General St. Clair, then in Philadelphia, was sent for, and desired to use his interposition in order to prevail on the troops to return to the barracks. His report gave no encouragement.

In this posture of things, it was proposed that Congress should adjourn. It was proposed by Mr. Hamilton that General St. Clair, in concert with the Executive Council of the State, should take order for terminating the mutiny. Mr. Reed moved that the General should endeavor to withdraw the troops by assuring them of the disposition of Congress to do them justice.

It was finally agreed that Congress should remain till the usual hour of adjournment, but without taking any step in relation to the alleged grievances of the soldiers, or any other business whatever. In the meantime the soldiers remained in their positions without offering any violence; individuals only offering occasional offensive words, and wantonly pointing their muskets at the windows of the Hall of Congress. No danger from premeditated violence was expected; but it was observed that spirituous drink, from the tippling houses adjoining, began to be liberally served out to the soldiers, and might lead to hasty excesses. None were committed, however; and about three o'clock, the usual hour, Congress adjourned, the soldiers (though in some instances offering

a mock obstruction) permitting the Members to pass through their ranks. They soon afterwards retired themselves to the barracks.

In the evening of the same day the Congress reassembled in their Hall, and passed resolutions expressive of their sense of the "gross insult which had been offered to the authority of the United States." They resolved:

That the President and the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania be informed that the authority of the United States having been this day grossly insulted by the disorderly and menacing appearance of a body of soldiers about the place in which the Congress had assembled, and the peace of this city being endangered by the mutinous disposition of said troops now in the barracks, it is in the opinion of the Congress that effectual measures be immediately taken for supporting the public authority.

They further resolved that unless it appear to their committee of conference with the Supreme Council of Pennsylvania that the foregoing resolution could be carried into effect, and that adequate and prompt exertions would be made for supporting the dignity of the Federal Government, the President of the Congress, on the advice of the committee, was authorized and directed to summon the members of Congress to meet at Trenton or Princeton in New Jersey, in order that effectual measures might be taken for suppressing the

present revolt and maintaining the dignity of the United States. Also the Secretary of War was directed to communicate with the Commander-in-Chief as to the state and disposition of the said troops, in order that he might take immediate measures to dispatch to Philadelphia such force as he might judge expedient for suppressing the disturbances. In pursuance of this their committee reported that the Supreme Council of Pennsylvania had "consulted a number of well-informed officers of the militia," and found that nothing in the present state of things was to be expected from that quarter except in case of further outrage and actual violence to personal property (as the militia of the State were not only ill-provided for for general service, but disinclined to act on the present situation); that in such a case a respectable body of citizens would arm for the security of their property and of the public peace; but it was to be doubted what measure of outrage would produce this effect, and in particular it was not to be expected merely from the repetition of the insult which had happened.

The committee declared that the excess of the mutineers had passed the bounds in which the spirit of compromise might consist with the dignity, and even the safety, of the Government—that the passiveness of the

conduct preserved toward the detachment which had mutinied at Lancaster and come to the city in defiance of their officers had led to the subsequent violence; that these considerations should determine Congress to adopt decisive measures.

The committee, finding that there was no satisfactory ground to expect prompt and adequate exertions on the part of the Executive of the State for supporting the public authority, were bound, by the resolution under which they acted, to advise the President to summon Congress to assemble at Princeton or at Trenton on Thursday, the 26th, next.

It was not until the 24th that Washington, who was at Newburgh, received the letter of the President of the Congress communicating to him the situation. He took immediate action and replied to it as follows:

It was not until three o'clock this afternoon that I had the first information of the infamous and outrageous mutiny of a part of the Pennsylvania troops. It was then I received your Excellency's letter of the 21st by your express; and, agreeably to your request contained in it, I instantly ordered three regiments of infantry and a detachment of artillery to be put in motion as soon as possible.

This corps, which you will observe by the return is a large proportion of our whole force, will consist of 1500 effectives. As all the troops which composed this gallant little army, as well

those who are furloughed as those who remain in service, are men of fidelity, I could not have occasion to make any choice of the corps.

While I suffer most poignant distress in observing that a handful of men, contemptible in numbers, and equally so in point of service (if the veteran troops from the southward have not been seduced by their example), and who are not worthy to be called soldiers, should disgrace themselves and their country, as the Pennsylvania mutineers have done, by insulting the sovereign authority of the United States, and that of their own, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction that their behaviour can not stain the name of the American soldiery. . . . For when we consider that these Pennsylvania levies, who have now mutinied, are recruits and soldiers of a day, who have not borne the heat and burden of the war, and who have in reality, very few hardships to complain of; and when we, at the same time, recollect that those soldiers who have lately been furloughed from this army are the veterans who have patiently borne hunger, nakedness, and cold; who have suffered and bled without a murmur, and who, with perfect good order, have retired to their homes without a settlement of their accounts or a farthing in their pockets; we shall be much astonished at the virtues of the latter, as we are struck with horror and detestation at the proceedings of the former; and every candid mind, without indulging ill-grounded prejudices, will undoubtedly make the proper discrimination.

The Congress on the summons of the President met at Princeton on the 30th of June, and on the following day on a report of a committee consisting of Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Ellsworth, and Mr. Bland, to whom was referred a motion of Mr. Hamilton, resolved that Major

General Howe, who had been placed in command of the detachment of 1,500 men sent by Washington for the suppression of the mutiny in Philadelphia, should be directed to march

> into Pennsylvania with such part of his force as he should deem necessary to put an effectual end to the late mutiny and to apprehend and bring to trial all persons belonging to the former as had been principally active in it.

This service was promptly and satisfactorily performed. The mutineers immediately submitted. Two of the sergeants were tried by court martial and condemned to death, but it appearing that they had been seduced by two of their subaltern officers of very bad character, who had made their escape on the approach of General Howe's detachment, they were pardoned by the Congress.

While the Congress was in this peripatetic stage, Williamsburg, Va., probably recalling the session at Yorktown, put in a claim for consideration as the capital of the country; but desired before pressing it too strongly to have defined "the jurisdiction proper for them to be invested with." A committee was appointed "to define this jurisdiction." Mr. Madison frankly dashed the hopes of Williamsburg, saying that

Annapolis would have a much greater number of advocates; but suggested that the best chance for both Virginia and Maryland would be for Maryland and Virginia to unite in offering a double jurisdiction on the banks of the Potomac.

Congress continued to sit at Princeton until November 4, 1783, when it adjourned to meet at Annapolis on the 26th day of that month. Here, on the 23rd day of December, Washington resigned his commission at a public audience of the Congress, whose members "sat covered as the representatives of the sovereignty of the States."

In April, 1784, under the instructions of the State Legislature, Rhode Island's delegates had moved a recess to be followed by a session at New Port. Jefferson, however, moved that the name New Port be struck out, and Philadelphia was proposed as a substitute. Jefferson urged Alexandria as the place. In the end, however, Trenton was selected, and in pursuance of a resolution which had been passed on the 26th of the preceding April, it adjourned to meet at Trenton on the 30th of October. They sat in Trenton until their adjournment on December 24th, when they moved once more to New York, where they assembled on January 25, 1785.

In consequence of the conditions which had forced them to abandon Philadelphia so hastily in June, 1783, Congress determined that they would select a seat of government which would be under their exclusive jurisdiction and where their authority and protection, instead of being confined to the inefficient or indifferent powers of a municipality or even of a state, should be secured by instrumentalities directly under their own control.

Much discussion relating to the proper location of the seat of government had already taken place, and at least one conclusion had been reached—that its location should be removed from any city or growing town whose importance as a mart of commerce might interfere with the convenience, endanger the safety, or overshadow the dignity of the national capital.

As soon as it was known that Congress would select a permanent home for the Government and build there a capital city, there was what might be called a scramble for the honour of having the capital. Some idea may be had of the rivalry from that which exists to-day whenever a great exposition is proposed, and although at that time the slowness of diffusing information and the difficulty of travelling confined the movement within narrower bounds than of later years, the spirit was the

same, and every effort was made and every artifice was tried which are employed to-day under similar circumstances.

More than twenty places competed for the honour, among them some whose suggestion would to-day appear ridiculous. Up and down the great rivers, places that were mere villages put in their claims, and some places that could not even boast a village began to aspire to the honour.

New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore were the principal contestants, but were really not in the running. Philadelphia had, of course, lost her chance when she showed herself unable to withstand a mob and protect the Congress; New York, through her refusal of the power to regulate trade in her great port and her laying duties on the exports of her neighbours, had alienated the good will of those by whom the question was to be decided. Moreover, the experience on the occasion of the Philadelphia mutiny had satisfied the Members that a large city failed to offer the security necessary for the proper exercise of their functions in freedom. Thus, although the large cities made tempting offers of public buildings, they were not accepted. It was agreed on all hands that the requisite conditions for the location were freedom from outside influences, a central position

offering convenience or accessibility, and agreeable surroundings. This principle was readily accepted by all; but, as soon as the claims of a special place were urged, the utmost opposition broke forth. Every thirty miles of variation meant a day's ride for the Members, north and south, and the clash of conflicting interests at times became so bitter that it was suggested that it might disrupt the country.

The Virginians, now united, named the banks of the Potomac as the most fitting place, and later, when Baltimore was declined, were backed by Maryland. New York, with strong endorsements from the eastward, proposed an island on the northeastern bank of the Hudson River. But all these were rejected.

On December 24, 1784, after a full debate, Congress passed an ordinance creating a commission with full power to lay out a district on the Delaware for the federal city. It was moved to substitute "Georgetown on the Potomac" as the site of the federal town; but only Virginia appears to have voted for this. This location on the Delaware, however, was afterward so energetically assailed that nothing came of it, and it appeared that the Commissioners never entered on their duties. There were, indeed, as has been said, some men

of intelligence who were so wholly skeptical of the chances for success of the American plan of government that they were ready to magnify every difficulty that arose.

So many geographical interests and aspirations were brought into competition that a very sharp contest quickly arose. The competition, however, at length narrowed down to that between two regions: one the banks of the Delaware, and the other the banks of the Potomac. After the decision referred to in favour of the banks of the Delaware had been made, the representatives of the Eastern and Southern States alike conceived such an apprehension that the Middle States would acquire such an influence as would give them the entire direction of the national concerns, and particularly that Pennsylvania had "conceived the idea of lording it over the other States," that "a temporary coalition" was made between the Eastern and Southern States against the Middle States, particularly against Pennsylvania, and with a view to "promote the mutual confidence and affection of the States," Mr. Gerry of Massachusetts proposed a plan for the alternate residence of the Congress in two places and moved that "suitable buildings for the accommodation of Congress be erected on the banks of the Potomac near its lower

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Falls as well as on the Delaware near its Falls, as had been determined on by a previous vote."[1]

This proposition met the acceptance of the Congress but, owing to the practical inconveniences of such an arrangement, was never carried into execution.

Having disposed, as they supposed finally, of the question of their permanent residence, the Congress arranged "in the same spirit of geographical compromise" by providing that until the buildings to be erected on the banks of the Delaware and the Potomac should be prepared for their reception, their residence should be alternately at equal periods of not more than one year and not less than six months in Trenton and Annapolis, and that Congress be adjourned on the 4th day of November to meet at Annapolis on the 26th day of the same month."[2]

By 1787, when the Constitutional Convention had assembled, the idea of a separate seat for the Federal Government had become sufficiently established in the public mind for Madison to move, without opposition, a resolution that among the enumerated powers of Congress should be the right to "exercise exclusively legislative authority at the seat of the general Govern-

[1] Rives's "Life and Times of Madison," vol. I, p. 492.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 489.

ment and over a district around the same not exceeding ——— square miles, the consent of the State or States comprising the same having first been obtained." This was presently modified in form to read that "Congress should exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may by cession of particular States and the acceptance of the Congress become the seat of Government of the United States." On the adoption of this resolution Trenton and Annapolis were formally offered to the Government, and both were promptly declined. Congress had had experience with both and preferred to fly to ills it knew not of rather than endure the ills it had. The view held by most was that "any city or place where a State government might be fixed" should be excluded.

Maryland and Virginia agreed through their representatives in Congress to cede a district ten miles square, within their borders, which Congress might occupy as a permanent seat of government. Virginia requested the coöperation of Maryland in inducing Congress to accept the grant, and pledged herself to furnish a sum, not to exceed $120,000, for the public buildings necessary, provided Maryland would raise at least two fifths of that amount. Mr. Monroe, in pursuance of this idea, offered a resolution that Maryland and Vir-

ginia should pay for the first public buildings provided Georgetown was selected. Pennsylvania and Maryland engaged to guarantee the clear navigation of the Susquehanna, if a district in that region were selected. Delaware and Maryland were to open water communication between the Delaware River and Chesapeake Bay. On the other hand, New York and Philadelphia offered their public buildings, should the Congress make the selection within their borders; and Baltimore, not to be outdone, opened a subscription for new public buildings as a lure to the Government to come to her. However, none of these drew the prize.

On September 27, 1789, Germantown, Pa., came within an ace of bearing off the palm. That day a motion to place the capital within a district ten miles square, at Germantown, Pa., passed both houses of Congress, and the matter appeared to be settled. The House of Representatives, however, had adopted an amendment to the original bill providing for the continuance of the Pennsylvania laws in force in the district to be ceded to the United States until Congress should otherwise provide. This required the bill to be sent back to the Senate and made it necessary to have recourse to a committee of conference. The session was to close in forty-eight hours, and before the matter

could be arranged the session ended; and when the Congress reconvened the following January in New York, sufficient opposition had been mustered against the selection, as formerly agreed upon, to defeat it, and the battle had to be fought all over again.

On the last day of May, in the second session of the First Congress, Pierce Butler of South Carolina introduced in the Senate a bill to establish the seat of government on the eastern bank of the Potomac. A select committee to which this bill was referred reported it favourably; but it was rejected by a vote of 15 to 9. Wilmington and Baltimore were then proposed, but were promptly rejected.

The battle finally resolved itself into a deal between Jefferson and Hamilton, whereby Hamilton agreed to the contention of the Southerners, in consideration of Jefferson's bringing enough votes to his aid to carry through the funding bill for the assumption of the state war debts by the Federal Government.

As the passage of this bill lay at the very foundation of Hamilton's financial system, the adoption of the measure was essential to his success. He had counted on the vote of Pennsylvania; but the Pennsylvanians were, in the first place, sore over the abandonment of Philadelphia, and felt additionally aggrieved that Ger-

mantown, which had so narrowly escaped being chosen as the capital, should have failed of the prize. They had not yet abandoned hope; but they were not to be counted on for Hamilton's purposes. In this state of the case, Jefferson came on the scene. His account of the deal is interesting. He "lauded" the capital city; but it was at a high price and one which might easily have destroyed him. Hamilton by the deal established his power; Jefferson came near sacrificing his.

He always resented, as he says, having been made by Hamilton to "hold the candle for him." He states, in his Ana, that Hamilton got hold of him one evening just after his return from France, when he was ignorant of the situation, and so filled him with apprehension that the very safety of the Union was imperilled by the line of cleavage which had been drawn as to the funding bill between the North and the South, that he induced him to use his influence with certain delegates to reconsider their opposition to the funding bill and to vote with his party and carry the measure through.

To employ his own words, Hamilton, he says,

> painted pathetically the temper into which the legislature had been wrought; the disgust of those who were called the creditor States; the danger of the secession of their members, and the separation of the States.

He urged that, though this question was not of Jefferson's department, yet a common duty should make it a common concern; that the President was the centre on which all administrative questions ultimately rested, and that all should rally round him and support with joint efforts measures approved by him, and that the question having been lost by a small majority only, it was probable that an appeal from Jefferson to the judgment and discretion of some of his friends, might affect a change in the vote, and the machine of government, now suspended, might be again set in motion.

Jefferson adds:

I told him that I was really a stranger to the whole subject; that not having yet informed myself of the financial system adopted, I knew not how far this was a necessary sequence; that undoubtedly if its rejection endangered a dissolution of the Union, at this incipient stage, I should deem that the most unfortunate of all consequences, to avert which all partial and temporary evils should be yielded. I proposed to him, however, to dine with me next day, and I would invite another friend or two, bring them into conference, together, and I thought it impossible that reasonable men, consulting together coolly, could fail, by some mutual sacrifices of opinions, to form a compromise which was to save the Union. The discussion took place. I could take no part in it but an exhortatory one, because I was a stranger to the circumstances which should govern it. But it was finally agreed upon that whatever importance had been attached to the rejection of this

proposition, the preservation of the Union and of the concord among the States, was more important, and that therefore the vote of rejection would better be rescinded, to effect which, some members should change their votes. But it was observed that this pill would be peculiarly bitter to the Southern States, and that some concomitant measure should be adopted to sweeten it a little to them. There had before been propositions to fix the seat of Government either at Philadelphia or at Georgetown on the Potomac, and it was thought that by giving it to Philadelphia for ten years, and to Georgetown permanently afterwards, this might, as an anodyne, calm in some degree the ferment which might be excited by the other measure alone. So two of the Potomac members (White and Lee, but White, with a revulsion of the stomach almost convulsive), agreed to change their votes, and Hamilton undertook to carry the other point.[1]

Hamilton, in pursuance of the agreement, did "carry the other point" and the national capital—the "Federal City" as it was termed—was finally fixed on the north bank of the Potomac.

Whether or not so able and astute a man as Mr. Jefferson could properly avail himself of the excuse of ignorance in such a case may be left to the reader's individual views. The State of North Carolina came into the Union just in time to cast her five votes for the Potomac site. Even so it was a close graze. The votes stood, in the House of Representatives, 32 to 29;

[1]Randolph's "Life of Jefferson," vol. 3, pp. 448–49.

and in the Senate, 14 to 12. It was, as has been suggested, the first illustration of the Solid South against the New England States and the Middle States.

The feeling engendered by the contest was long in being appeased. Fisher Ames declared that the animosities growing out of the question might split the Union, and disappointed Members loudly asserted that they would rather not attend the sessions than go so far. Every form of attack was resorted to. Lampooners exhausted their wit on it. The spot on the Potomac was described as a "howling, malarious wilderness," which in fact it was, and for a long time the marshes and frog ponds of the national capital were the subjects of unmeasured derision. Yet, the decison of the Congress, while unpopular for a time, was soon regarded with reasonable indifference by the general public and was eventually acquiesced in with more or less grace by all but the intractable malcontents, although from time to time efforts were made to reverse the decision and change the location to some place farther north; but they always failed.

There were, of course, other considerations than those conveyed in the deal between Hamilton and Jefferson, which led to the selection of the Potomac site. But probably the most potent reasons were the fact that

this was really the most central and proper location and that Washington must have favoured it.

As in all other public questions so in this, the name and influence of Washington carried the day, and the region was finally agreed upon within a little more than six weeks of the adoption of the Constitution by the last of the thirteen states, and within six months the exact spot was chosen. Other commissioners had dallied and fooled about the business, and finally Congress, worried by the delay and bickering, placed the matter in Washington's hands, with three commissioners to act under him. He selected Messrs. Johnson and Carroll of Maryland, and Stuart of Virginia.

The idea of connecting the East with the West by a water line had long been the dream of far-seeing statesmen, and covetous eyes had long been cast on the great Valley region of the Belle Riviere and the Mississippi, the Mother of Waters—not the Father, as later translated—lying beyond the mountains, with the French and the Spanish in the background. Much heartburning and some dangerous bitterness had been engendered by the difficulties and inconvenience of requiring the trans-mountain settlers to attend Court and Legislative sessions on the east side of the mountains, and there had even arisen a party who, in speech at

least, were hostile to the United States, and talked openly of their interests being with Spain, a theory which was to bear acid fruit within little more than a decade. Washington was, first of all men, the one to carry through this idea of piercing the mountain barrier and joining the waters of the Atlantic with those of the Mississippi. When a mere youth, he had crossed the mountains to the head of the Ohio, and when still a youth he had lived in and surveyed great tracts of land to the westward, drained both to the Chesapeake and to the Gulf of Mexico; he had ridden over it and gained great distinction in Braddock's ill-starred campaign, and recently, in his more mature years, he had explored, in the interests of the Potomac and James River Land Improvement Companies, the entire length of the Potomac from its source to the tidewater.

Human nature was the same then as it is to-day, and it was recognized that as soon as it was known that a particular site had been selected, the owners of the land would be likely to put up the price on the Government and hold them up for a sum far beyond their value. Quite wide latitude was given the President, in selecting a site, by the Act of July 16, 1790, accepting the grants from the states of Virginia and Maryland.

On the 28th of June, a bill was introduced in the

Senate authorizing Washington to select the place on the River Potomac, between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and the Conococheague, and this bill was adopted on the 9th of July.[1]

The President was by this Act authorized to appoint and, by supplying vacancies from refusal to act or other causes, to keep in appointment as long as necessary, three commissioners who, or any two of them, should under the President's survey, and by proper metes and bounds, define and limit a district or territory not exceeding ten miles square on the River Potomac at some space between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and the Conococheague (a stream which enters the Potomac at Williamsport, Maryland), which, when defined, limited, and located, should be deemed the district accepted by this Act for the permanent seat of government of the United States. The said commissioners or any two of them were to have power to purchase or accept any quantity of land on the southern side of the said river within the said district which the President

[1] In the House of Representatives four distinct propositions were made in the shape of amendments to change the site of the Federal City on motions to strike out "The Potomac etc.," and insert some other location. First, to substitute Delaware instead of Potomac, ayes 29, noes 32. Second, in the State of Pennsylvania including Germantown, ayes 22, noes 29. Third, between the Susquehanna and the Potomac, ayes 25, noes 36. Fourth, Maryland including Baltimore, ayes 26, noes 34.

"The Capitals of most countries are the especial pride of their people. It is not so with us—at least, it has not been so in the past. Happily, it appears as though this condition were changing. It has, indeed, ever appeared to me strange that Americans know so little of, and care too little for, the Capital of their own country. Nature, prodigal of gracious slope and curve and tone, has endowed it with, perhaps, more charm than any other National Capital."

THOMAS NELSON PAGE.

should deem proper for the use of the United States, and should, prior to the first Monday in December in the year 1800, provide suitable buildings for the accommodation of the Congress and for the President and for the public offices of the Government of the United States, and it was further provided that on the first Monday in December, the seat of government of the United States should, by virtue of this Act, be transferred to the district and place aforesaid. The President was authorized and requested to accept grants of money for defraying the expenses of such purchases and buildings, and it was further provided that the necessary expenses of the removal from Philadelphia to the new seat of government should be defrayed out of the duties on imposts and tonnage.

With characteristic promptness Washington proceeded to carry out his instructions about laying off the Federal City and District and making the necessary preparations to receive and house the Government properly, at the termination of the period during which its site was to be in Philadelphia.

Reluctant to relinquish such a prize and hopeful that something would occur to prevent the removal of the seat of government, the authorities at Philadelphia set to work and spent a large sum of money in the erection

of public buildings, including a Presidential Mansion for Washington himself. After the Mansion was erected, Washington refused to occupy it, assigning as his reason that it was impossible for him to furnish such a mansion in a suitable style, and he continued to live in the house which he already occupied. It is possible, though there is no record evidence of the fact, that he felt that if he should become installed in the new grand Presidential Mansion thus provided, it might be an additional clamp to fix the seat of government in Philadelphia, while his ardent wishes for the establishment lay quite in another direction, on the banks of the Potomac River. Washington, therefore, pursued his course without deviation.

CHAPTER II

THE SURVEY

WITHIN a short time, Washington, who was already perhaps more familiar than any other one person with the region lying along the Potomac River, had appointed his commissioners, and explored the region anew, and on the twenty-fourth day of January, 1791, he issued a proclamation declaring that after duly examining and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the several situations within the limits to which he was restricted, he had selected the location of the district for the location of the permanent seat of government of the United States, and he directed the commissioners to proceed and run forthwith lines of experiment according to certain lines of experiment which he had laid down.

These lines began at the Court House in Alexandria in Virginia, running thence due southwest one half a mile, and thence due southeast across till it should strike Hunting Creek, to fix the beginning of the said four lines of experiment; then beginning the first of the four said

lines of experiment at the point of Hunting Creek where the said southeast course should have struck the same and running the said first line due northwest ten miles; thence the second line into Maryland due northeast ten miles; thence the third line due southeast ten miles; thence the fourth line due southwest ten miles to the beginning of Hunting Creek.

Congress, by an amendatory act passed on the third day of March, 1791, gave the President further authority to make any part of the territory below the limit already surveyed and above the mouth of Hunting Creek a part of the said district so as to include the convenient part of the Eastern Branch and all lands lying on the lower side thereof and also the town of Alexandria. And Washington, in pursuance of this amendatory act, issued a further proclamation on the 30th day of March, 1791, taking into the district certain lands therein mentioned, so as to embrace the convenient and available outlet of the Eastern Branch of the Potomac.[1]

[1] The importance of connecting the deep-water navigation of the east side of the Alleghenies with water navigation to the west had, as stated, early engaged the attention of the people of Virginia and Maryland, and the Potomac Company, with this in view, had been incorporated by the Legislatures of Virginia and Maryland immediately on the close of the Revolutionary War. Washington himself had always a deep interest in this measure, and in company with Colonel Johnson, afterward Governor Johnson, of Maryland, and several other gentlemen, he made an exploration of the Potomac and a survey of the river above the

It is said that preliminary to the location of the District of Columbia, Washington personally measured the region in which he favoured the location by stepping it off, so that when the lines were finally run he had a reasonably accurate idea of just where the boundaries would be. Pending the final decision, negotiations were carried on with the owners of the property which would be embraced by the district, and when the final decision was reached, these negotiations had to be concluded. The land about the site of the new capital had been settled early and in the main by a canny Scotch-Irish stock.

The great tract of land lying between the Rock Creek

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tide-water, using for the purpose, it is said, a dug-out canoe. Mr. G. W. P. Custis, Washington's adopted grandson, in his "Recollections and Private Memoirs of the Life of Washington," gives a pleasant account of this expedition on which was to hinge so largely the future location of the capital of the nation.

He tells of Washington's civility toward his companions, when at night-fall they would be shown into a planter's home or a farmhouse on the banks of the river where there would be only one guest room with two beds. Though Washington would say, "Come, gentlemen, who will be my bedfellow?" the situation was too much for even so bold a man as Colonel Johnson, and Washington would be allowed a bed to himself. Mr. Custis records also in his account of this expedition one of the rare instances in which a glimpse is given of the deep fires which burned below Washington's calm exterior. Barbarity in any form always excited him, and Indian methods were the cause of his outbreaks and fury on at least two occasions when he gave way to violence of temper. It was while he was at Harper's Ferry on this expedition that the news was received of the burning, at Sandusky, of the gallant Colonel Crawford by his Indian captors. Crawford had served with distinction in the Revolution, and at the account of his barbarous death Washington was moved to tears; but to tears succeeded an outburst of wrath in which he pointed to one of the lofty cliffs which tower above the gorge and swore, "Were I the sole judge of these Indians, by Heaven, I would hurl every one of them from that fearful height to the depths below!"

and the Eastern Branch, which was chosen by Washington for the site of the new capital, was divided into plantations and farms, owned by nineteen separate proprietors, all of whom had to be dealt with, conciliated, and brought to an agreement.

There were already several villages within the limits of the district selected. It was at one time contemplated to embrace Georgetown in the limits of the new capital, and Washington was inclined to do this. Georgetown, however, was already too large and important a place and its lands too expensive for it to be included in the district. There were, however, even within the limits as laid out, several places which had been laid out as towns, such as Carrollsburgh, near the junction of the Eastern Branch with the main stream, and Hamburgh, on the slope of what was then called Camp Hill, from a tradition that Braddock's Army encamped there, and was later known as Observatory Hill, which claimed the dignity of the name of "city," a dignity which was recognized in the Act of Maryland, "concerning the territory of Columbia and the City of Washington."

To get an idea of the appearance at that day of the region selected for the new federal city, we must first pick our way through the literature of the time: reports,

pamphlets, books of travel, wherever we may find references apt to the subject, making our selection therefrom; fit the fragments together and form them into a map. Then, with this map, go to one of the lofty points on the heights of the present splendid capital, close our eyes to the present superficial view, and see with the mind's eye alone.

Should we do this we should find spread out below us a panorama of field and forest and river unsurpassed in charm of landscape by any view in the land.

The long curving reach of the Potomac, with its background of Virginia hills from above Analostan Island to where it disappears below Alexandria, would appear much wider than at present, for it then covered all of the Potomac Flats, making a great inlet almost to the foot of the hill on which now stands the Court House of the District. Beyond would rise the wooded heights of Virginia, with a glimpse of Alexandria, "the neatest town in America," in the distance.

Below us, on the Washington side, we should find spread at our feet a wide semi-circle of broken land, of alternate hill and ravine, heavily forested for the most part with magnificent trees, interspersed with farms and dotted with simple and indifferent farm buildings, and intersected with numerous streams.

To the westward, embowered in fine trees, some of which survive to the present day, lay the "City of Georgetown," already a place of importance as commanding the highest point of deep-water navigation, and the junction point of the waterway that should lead to the great and unknown West. We should find that through a deep bottom dividing Georgetown from the site of the new city, wound a fine, bold stream, known then and now as Rock Creek. To our left would rise a fine forest-clad hill, already known as Rome, having been so called humorously by a former proprietor named Pope; while at our feet we should follow the windings of another stream, its sources lying in the wooded ravines stretching some miles to the northward. When its branches unite near the northern boundary of the city, about half way between Rock Creek and the Eastern Branch, we should find them, though once known as Goose Creek, now having the classical name of Tiber Creek. This stream ran first eastward and then turned for a space northward, when it again turned almost due south, flowing through the bottom along the western base of Capitol Hill, swerving at a right angle and suddenly widening where it struck the lowlands, swept almost due west through what has come to be known as the White Lot, the southern portion of

the grounds attached to the White House. A stream known as Jones' Creek, formerly St. James', would wind down to the westward at the point where the Anacostia or the Eastern Branch joined the main stream of the Potomac, a point once known as Buzzard's Point; but soon to bear the name of Greenleaf Point. Another stream rising in the ravine east of Eighteenth Street, Northwest, where it climbs the Heights, would follow the general direction of Seventeenth Street, Northwest, southward to the bottom of the hill where now runs L Street, and there turning west across Connecticut Avenue, would wind northwestwardly until it flowed into Rock Creek a little south of P Street crossing, would cut across the proposed site of the city and make its way into Rock Creek through what came to be known as Froggy Bottom.

The great tract of land lying before us, between Rock Creek and the Eastern Branch, was, as stated, divided into plantations owned by some nineteen separate proprietors, all of whom had to be dealt with, conciliated, and brought to an agreement.

It appeared feasible to the genius that planned the City of Washington to avail itself of this natural stretch of water lying between the capitol and the presidential mansion for both practical and ornamental purposes.

The plans provided for the use of the Tiber stream first for the capitol building itself, surveys having shown that the springs which fed this stream sprang up at altitudes of some 236½ feet above the level of the tide in the Tiber. When it should have served its purpose in providing for the needs of the capitol itself and that part of the city, they planned that its overplus should fall from under the base of the capitol edifice, in a cascade of twenty feet in height and fifty feet in breadth, into the reservoir below, and thence to run in three falls through the gardens into the Grand Canal.

Where an agreement could not be reached with the landowners of the new district, provision had to be made to condemn the property. A multitude of details had to be considered with a view to giving good titles, to building the city, and governing it when it should be built. This was for the most part successfully accomplished on terms mutually satisfactory to the owners and the commissioners. Foreigners were given the right to take and hold title, and agreement was reached generally by the conveyance of alternate tracts of land to the Government on terms agreed on, the owners continuing to hold the intermediate tracts.

In order to prevent any question whatever as to future titles within the limits of the city, Washington

required that the owners should convey in fee simple to the Government all the lands within its limits and then to take a reconveyance from the Government of the alternate lots. The Government thus became, so to speak, the original proprietor of all the lands within the city, including parks and streets, and the original grantor of such lots as were reconveyed to the ci-devant owners.

Washington found that the situation called into play all his wisdom, experience, and tact, for in securing title he had to deal with so many different proprietors. With most of them he was able to make a satisfactory arrangement without much difficulty. This settlement was based upon an arrangement whereby the lands were divided into alternate lots, one half of which were conveyed to the Government at a price of £25 per acre, the other half being retained by the original owners, the Government paying at the same time for such lands as might be appropriated for public buildings.

The owners of the plantations or farms entered into an agreement in writing, under their seals, in the following words:

We, the subscribers, in consideration of the great benefits we expect to derive from having the Federal City laid off on our lands, do hereby agree and bind ourselves, heirs, executors and

administrators, to convey in trust to the President of the United States, or Commissioners, or such person or persons as he shall appoint, by good and sufficient deeds in fee simple, the whole of our respective lands which he may think proper to include within the lines of the Federal City, for the purposes and on the conditions following:

The President shall have the sole power of directing the Federal City to be laid off in the manner he pleases. He may retain any number of squares he may think proper for any public improvements or any other public uses, and the lots only which shall be laid off shall be joint property between the trustees on behalf of the public, and equally divided between the public and the individuals as soon as may be after the City is laid off.

For the streets the proprietors shall receive no compensation; but for the squares or lands in any form taken for public buildings or any kind of public improvements or uses, the proprietors whose lands shall be so taken shall receive at the rate of £25 per acre, to be paid by the public.

The whole wood on the lands shall be the property of the proprietors, and should any be desired by the President to be reserved or left standing, the same shall be paid for by the public at a just and reasonable valuation, exclusive of the £25 per acre to be paid for the land on which the same shall remain.

Each proprietor shall retain the full possession and use of his land until the same shall be sold and occupied by the purchase of the lots laid out thereupon, and in all cases where the public arrangements as to streets, lots, etc., will admit of it, each proprietor shall possess his buildings and improvements and graveyards, paying to the public only one half of the esti-

mated value of the land on which the same shall be, or £12 10s per acre; but in cases where the arrangements of streets, lots, squares, etc., will not admit of this, and it shall become necessary to remove such buildings, etc., the proprietors of the same shall be paid the reasonable value thereof by the public.

Nothing herein contained shall affect the lots any of the parties to this agreement may hold in the towns of Hamburgh, or Carrollsburgh.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and seals this 30th day of March, in the year of our Lord, 1791.

Washington, however, found himself balked by one proprietor by the name of David Burns, who owned a plantation lying along the eastern banks of the Rock Creek, and who lived in an old little dormer-windowed house, embowered in trees and covered with vines, near the foot of Seventeenth Street, not very far from the river. David Burns declined to accede to the plan accepted by his neighbours. Whether his canny blood induced him to hold out for a higher price, whether his Scotch obstinacy made him decline to fall in with the general course, or whether he was above the allurements of wealth and preferred to live in his modest home undisturbed by the excitement which the new capital would cause, he withstood Washington's proposition so stoutly that the President referred to him as the "Obstinate Mr. Burns." For once Washington found himself face to face with a

man with whom neither his prestige nor his reason availed in the least. It is said that when Washington, moved from his habitual calm by his obstinacy, charged him with being extortionate and threatened him with condemnation proceedings, the old Scotsman gave him as good as he sent, saying, "I suppose that you think that people here are going to take every grist that comes from you as pure grain; but what would you have been if you had not married the widow Custis?" Ben Perley Poor gives a somewhat different version of it in Scotch dialect. The story has been discountenanced by some as being too improbable to be credited;[1] but I have heard in Virginia, as coming down through the old people, an even stronger story than this.

It is related that Washington, in an outbreak of wrath, informed him that unless he accepted the terms offered, he would have his lands condemned, for he would not submit to extortion. The Scotsman, it appears, had something of a temper himself, and the story goes that in his resentment at the thought of having his land condemned he said to Washington, "Who are you, to charge me with extortion? You would never have been heard of but for old Mrs. Custis' lands and Niggers."

[1] Forbes-Lindsay's "Washington."

The site of Washington itself, as laid out, comprehended only the lands beginning on the east side of Rock Creek, at a stone standing in the middle of the road leading from Georgetown to Bladensburg, thence in the middle of the said road to a stone standing on the Reedy Branch of Goose Creek, thence southeastwardly making an angle 61 degrees 20 minutes with the meridian to a stone standing in the road leading from Bladensburg to the Eastern Branch Ferry, thence south to a stone 80 polls north of the east-and-west line already drawn from the mouth of Goose Creek to the Eastern Branch. Thence east parallel to the said Eastern Branch, then with the waters of the Eastern Branch of the Potomac River to Rock Creek and the beginning.

It is said—to reduce the city to figures—that it extended from northwest to southeast about four miles and one half, and from east to southwest about two and one half miles; that its circumference is fourteen miles, the aggregate length of the streets is one hundred and ninety-nine miles, and of the avenues, sixty-five miles. The avenues, streets, and open spaces contain 3,604 acres, and the public reservations exclusive of the reservations numbers 10, 11, and 12, which have since been disposed of for private purposes, 513 acres.

The whole area of the squares of the city amounts

to 131,684,176 square feet, or 3,016 acres, one half of which, 1,508 acres, was reserved for the use of the United States, and the remaining half assigned to the original proprietors.[1]

[1] Watterston's "Guide to Washington."

CHAPTER III

THE PLANNING OF THE CAPITAL

FORTUNATELY for the country, the men who were to have most to do with planning the Federal City were men of large ideas. Washington, Jefferson, and Madison saw the future of this country with eyes in which it loomed large.

In laying out the city itself, it was decided to do so on a large plan with a view to the future greatness of the capital of the nation. Washington believed that within a century, should the country keep united, "it would produce a city, though not as large as London, yet with a magnitude inferior to few others in Europe."[1]

In the actual work of planning and surveying the city, Washington and those working with him secured the offices of two able engineers and surveyors. The first of these was Major Andrew Ellicott, an American engineer officer of much distinction and experience, who having in 1784 run the boundary line between Virginia and Pennsylvania, and in the following year, jointly

[1] Letter from Washington to Mr. Fairfax.

with two other gentlemen,[1] located the western line of Pennsylvania, was still later, after the Federal City was laid off (1798), commissioned by the President to settle, by survey, the boundary dispute between the states of New York and Pennsylvania, and to decide in which state lay the town of Erie.[2] The other engineer surveyor was the young talented French engineer, Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant.

Among the most picturesque characters evolved in this picturesque period of Washington's development was this young French engineer, Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, who had the spirit of an artist, the skill of an engineer, and the soul of a gambler, and who was one of the most capable, egotistical, and gifted men of his time.

L'Enfant has the reputation, and is entitled to a fair share of the credit—though hardly as much as he has lately received—of being the sole author of the splendid plan on which the national capital is laid off. Such is the fickleness of fortune, even in matters of fame, that for a long time his name was almost forgotten, whereas in another period it has attracted nearly all the lustre due to others for this sagacious and splendid conception. That he was a man of grand ideas, of great personal

[1] David Rittenhouse and Andrew Porter.

[2] Forbes-Lindsay's "Washington," p. 42.

force, and extraordinary gifts, is certainly true; but it is far from true that to him alone is due the magnificence of the plan for the capital of the United States.

Much of this grand conception is due to Washington, and much—especially in those matters of grand detail which make Washington City unique among the cities of the country—is due to the universal genius of Thomas Jefferson. This, it has been well said, we may cede, without robbing Pierre Charles L'Enfant of the credit due him for his fine professional achievement in constructing the plan.

The young French engineer—who had come to America in 1777, at the age of twenty-two, and had been commissioned captain of engineers—was a man of genius, and his genius had been recognized; but alone, he would hardly have been able to carry through the original plan on so comprehensive a scale. In fact, the records show that he was originally regarded only as one of the several men employed to perfect the plans conceived by his superiors. For example, we find the Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, writing to the commissioners on January 15, 1791, as follows:

> The President thinks it better that the outline at least of the City, and perhaps Georgetown, should be laid down on the plat of the territory. I have the honor now to send it and to desire

that Major Ellicott may do it as soon as convenient, that it may be returned in time to lay before the Congress.

We find Thomas Jefferson again on February 2, 1791, instructing Major Ellicott to proceed by the first stage to the federal territory on the Potomac for the purpose of making a survey of it. In March, 1791, he sends L'Enfant to Georgetown for the purpose of making "drawings of the grounds most likely to be approved for the site of the Federal town and the buildings." In April, 1791, Jefferson writes to L'Enfant:

In compliance with your request I have examined my papers and found the plans of Frankfort-on-Mayne, Carlsruhe, Paris, Amsterdam, Strasburg, Orleans, Bordeaux, Lyons, Montpelier, Marseilles, Turin, and Milan, which I send in a roll by the post. They are on large and accurate scale, having been procured by me while in those respective cities myself. As they are connected with notes I have made while on my travels and often necessary to explain them to myself, I will beg your care of them, and to return them when no longer useful to you, leaving you absolutely free to keep them as long as useful. I am happy that the President has left the planning of the Town in such good hands, and have no doubt that it will be done to satisfaction.

In the same letter the Secretary volunteers another suggestion, thus:

Whenever it is proposed to prepare plans for the Capital, I should prefer the adoption of some one of the models of antiq-

uity, which have had the approbation of thousands of years; and for the President's House, I should prefer the celebrated fronts of modern buildings, which have already received the approbation of all good judges, such as the Galerie de Louvre, the Garden Meubles, and two fronts of the Hotel du Salm.

It may be said that in the laying off and the building of the City of Washington, as the federal capital in the form in which we are so fortunate as to have it, the creative and propelling force was Washington himself. The intellect and directing power was Jefferson. These two combined to produce the breadth and greatness of the plan. The medium through which their great product was conveyed was the commissioners, the engineers, and the architects. The commissioners held and administered the powers vested in them with wisdom, integrity, and ability. Of the engineers, the first was Major Andrew Ellicott, to whom was due the conformity of the plan with the law under which the city was laid off. To L'Enfant was due, not the original plan nor the mature one, but the beauty and taste and the harmonious grandeur of the original conception. That these men all touched at different points is evident, sometimes they even collided. But I think that a statement of all the facts connected with the establishment of the City of Washington will lead to the conclu-

sion that it is to Washington and Jefferson that the greatness and magnificence of the plan was due; to the commissioners and Ellicott, its soundness and accuracy, which is but another name for common sense; and to L'Enfant, its magnificence. The influence of these great men was merged into one great beautiful and harmonious plan which was convenient for the present and which promised splendour for the future.

L'Enfant was indebted to Jefferson for his employment in the service which has given to him his distinction and on which will forever rest his fame. He was no doubt known to Washington, for he served with credit as an engineer officer in the Revolutionary War; but it was Jefferson who, on the conclusion of the arrangement by which the capital city was to be placed on the banks of the Potomac, conceived the idea of availing himself of the science and the taste of the young French officer.

Washington and he united in the determination to lay off the capital city on lines which should be worthy of the future of the country as they foresaw it. The enemies of the Potomac measure scoffed at the idea of placing it among "the malarious wilderness," as they termed it, and while many influential and intelligent persons doubted whether the plan would ever work

through to success, Washington and Jefferson paid no attention to the scoffers or to the ridicule, but proceeded with their large conception. Both of them had been engineers and surveyors by profession; but Washington was now the President and Jefferson was the Secretary of State, and it was necessary to have someone who could give all his time to the work. Jefferson, ever ready to recognize ability, turned to Ellicott and L'Enfant. They were satisfactory to him, and when Washington returned from his progress through the South, in his white chariot in which he had made a journey of seventeen hundred miles, drawn by the same span of horses, he found Major L'Enfant awaiting him at Mt. Vernon. In the week during which he remained there, the plan of the new city was matured. L'Enfant was not only a man of ideas, but an accomplished draughtsman, and the plan was set on his map with great beauty.

It is said that he followed closely the work of LeNotre, in Versailles, whose distinguished features, like those in Washington, consisted in transverse streets and intersecting avenues with fine open squares and circles and driveways, embellished with fountains and borders, and so arranged that intersection of two or more streets or avenues would extend the view to the horizon.

It is impossible at this period to specify just how much of the credit for the work is due to any one man. L'Enfant, who remained for a long time with little or no credit, though he claimed it all, has of late years seemed destined to secure all of the credit for this great work.

That L'Enfant contributed his full share to the beauty and convenience of Washington is not to be denied. Also it is a pleasant reflection that notwithstanding the almost universal quarrel in which he involved himself, by reason of his egotism, his insubordination, and truculence, his memory has at last achieved the fame which his genius merited, and that after his ashes had lain for half a century in an almost unknown grave, they were remembered by the nation and now repose in the National Cemetery at Arlington. But however properly his genius and merits have been recognized, in his life he must have been "gey ill to live with."

He soon eclipsed the apparently easy-going, kindly, Quaker gentleman who was his engineer associate, and took up the running in the matter of the plan, which eventually, however modified, came to bear his name. He was soon in a contention with not only the commissioners, but with the President and the Secretary of State themselves. And before he was through, he was in so serious a quarrel with substantially everyone in

authority connected with the measure, that he was dismissed from the service, and spent the greater portion of the rest of his life in assailing them by every means in his power.

In June, 1791, he submitted a tentative plan, which, though it was returned to him for the correction of errors and for desired alterations, contained many of the admirable features subsequently adopted, and was based on the general scheme of which we have so admirable an illustration to-day.

Owing to exigencies which subsequently arose, many of the grand features of the plan proposed were subsequently ignored and lost, and with difficulty are only now being regained at great cost through the efforts of the Park Commission. The idea of the Mall and the whole layout of the public grounds, with imposing monuments and imposing public buildings, are based on this plan, which not only embraced these beautiful features but included a system of fountains and arcades of great magnificence also.

Owing to the conformation of the land and to the belief that the convenience of water traffic to the eastward, where the Eastern Branch now comes into the Potomac, would naturally lead to the city's growing most rapidly in that part of the district, two of the three

markets provided for in the plan were to be on the eastern side of the capital, toward the Eastern Branch. Where the Central Market now stands was a portion of the park system laid off for the site of the Grand Fountains.

L'Enfant was soon not only in a quarrel with the commissioners; but in a contention with President Washington. He opposed a publication of the plan proposed, which they were in favour of, urging against it the argument that speculators would take advantage of the plan and would buy up large parcels of land in the promising sections. As this argument did not appeal to his superiors he determined to carry through his contention by withholding the engravings of the plan. Washington was not one to put up with such insubordination from a subordinate official and in a letter to one of the commissioners he wrote (November 20, 1791) expressing his surprise and concern that Major L'Enfant had refused the map of the Federal City when it was requested by the commissioners for the satisfaction of the purchasers of the sale.

. . . I have, however, since I have come into the knowledge of Major L'Enfant's refusal of the map at the sale, given him to understand through a direct channel, though not an official one as yet . . . that in future he must look to the Commissioners

for directions; that they having laid the foundation of this great design, the superstructure depended upon them; that I was perfectly satisfied that his plans and his ideas and opinions would have due weight if properly offered and explained. He conceives, or would have others believe, that the sale was promoted by withholding the general map, and thereby means of comparison; but I caused it to be signified to him, that I am of a different opinion, and that it is much easier to impede than to force a sale, and none who knew what they were about would be induced to buy (to use an old adage) a pig in a poke. When I see Major L'Enfant, who it is said will shortly be here, I shall endeavor to bring him some explanation of the terms on which he will serve the public; and will impress upon him the necessity of dispatch, that as early a sale as circumstances will permit, may ensue.

The commissioners desired to recommend that "all the squares adjacent to the Avenue (Pennsylvania Avenue) from the President's House to the Capitol and from thence to the River, through the whole breadth of the ground, between Rock Creek and the Eastern Branch should be first laid off," and the Secretary of State, Jefferson, wrote, in a letter to Major Ellicott, dated November 21, 1791, the day after Washington's letter, to consult him on the subject, urging that the sale might not be delayed by the engravings.

Before long L'Enfant was in such open rebellion that we find the commissioners declaring in a formal report that it is impossible for them to secure from him

acknowledgment of their authority or conformity with their suggestions, and the Secretary writing a letter to L'Enfant, at first in conciliatory terms, but with an intimation that any man of reasonable discretion would have recognized as something very near an ultimatum:

The advance of the season begins to require that the plans for the buildings and other public works at the Federal City be in readiness, and the persons engaged who are to carry them into execution. The circumstances which have lately happened have produced an uncertainty whether you may be disposed to continue your services here. I am charged by the President to say that your continuance would be desirable to him; and at the same time to add that the law requires that it should be in subordination to the Commissioners. I must beg the favor of your answer whether you will continue your services on the footing expressed in this letter.

As L'Enfant's reply was not what was expected, the Secretary of State promptly gave him his ultimatum in more direct terms:

From your letter received yesterday in answer to my last, and your declaration in conversation with Mr. Lear, it is understood that you absolutely decline acting under the authority of the present Commissioners; if this understanding of your meaning be right, I am instructed by the President to inform you that notwithstanding the desire he has entertained to preserve your agency in the business, the condition upon which it is to be done is inadmissible, and your services must be at an end.

Even this had no effect on L'Enfant, and a few days later Jefferson notified the commissioners that, it having been found impracticable to employ Major L'Enfant about the Federal City in that degree of subordination which was lawful and proper, he had been formally dismissed from the public service; and he added that it was proper that L'Enfant should receive the reward for his past services, and expressing the wish that he should have no just cause of discontent, suggests that it be liberal. He told the commissioners that the President had suggested that $2,500 or $3,000 would be ample, but left the determination to them. The Secretary further informed the commissioners that Ellicott was to go on and finish the laying off and the plotting of the ground and the surveying of the district.

L'Enfant had already had $600, and the commissioners deposited to his credit in bank the sum of five hundred guineas, and notified him that they would convey to him, in further compensation, a lot either near the President's House or near the capitol, as he might prefer.

Some eight years later he addressed to the Congress a memorial stating his claim against the Government, and dwelling on the injury done to his fame as an artist and the resulting injury to his fortune. He makes a general attack upon those who had opposed him. In

this he included the commissioners and Major Ellicott, whom he charges not only with having violated his confidence and pillaged his papers, but with also having stolen his reputation; and he includes in his charge, by unmistakable inference, both the President and the Secretary of State, asserting that

> These Jealousies and Speculations Contradictory to my System, caused me the loss of a bargain of $50,000, a sum of right perquisite accruing from particular enterprises of building in amount at first place of $1,000,000 and which intended to double that sum with an Increase to me, being to have been planned and conducted in concert and to the advancement of the public part of Improvements were Consequently to have depended upon my direction.

His plan was decidedly better than his written English; however, it contains one salient fact, that he considered himself deeply aggrieved.

The items which he considered were due him were as follows:

For One Year's labor	$ 8,000
For profit he would have received from the sale of maps	37,500
For perquisites of right negotiations and enterprises	50,000
Total	$95,500

The Congress on this claim took the view that he was entitled only to the compensation determined by the

commissioners, and some years later he was awarded $2,394, which was deemed equivalent to the sum the commissioners had placed to his credit. It is due to L'Enfant to say that he rejected all such piecemeal offers with high scorn, and rejected also the professorship at West Point, which, through Jefferson's good offices, was tendered him in 1812, and that he spent the later years of his life in dignified poverty as the honoured guest of William Dudley Digges, of Green Hill.

Growing out of the quarrel which became so serious that it threatened, as Jefferson said, "a condition in which the enemies of the enterprise might, 'Trumpet an abortion of the whole,'" the House of Representatives in 1802 appointed a committee to inquire into the matter. Having made the investigation, the committee reported as follows:

> Your committee find that the plan of the City was originally designed by Mr. L'Enfant; but it was in many respects rejected by the President of the United States, and a plan drawn by Mr. Ellicott purporting to have been made from actual survey, and which was engraved and published by the order of General Washington in the year 1792. This plan was circulated by the Government through the United States, and sent to our agents in Europe, by authority of the Government, as the plan of the city, and is the only one which has been engraved and published; this is generally known by the appellation of the engraved plan.

In continuance, this report cites a formal statement by a number of citizens to President Adams in 1798:

> While Mr. Ellicott was surveyor, a plan was engraved by direction of the Commissioners and a very numerous impression taken therefrom. . . . This plan though it differed in many respects from that by which the first sales were made,—and which had been laid before the Congress,[1] was generally considered as the final plan of the City; and from that period, sales have invariably been made in conformity therewith, under the idea that the sanction under which it was issued was a sufficient guarantee of its stability.

It has already been observed that there were several alterations made in the plan between Mr. L'Enfant's first design and the publishing of the last engraved plan, in Philadelphia, by the Commissioners, and promulgated as the plan of the City.

From the commissioners under date of March 23, 1802, the chairman of the committee received the following significant communication:

> Major L'Enfant's plan of the City was sent to the House of Representatives on the 13th day of December, 1791, by President Washington, for the information of the House, and afterwards withdrawn. Many alterations were made therefrom by Major Ellicott with the approbation of the President and under

[1] That is the final plan of Major L'Enfant, submitted to the President in August, 1791.

A cavalier reining up his charger before one of the fine old mansions of early Washington.

his authority; all the appropriations except as to the Capitol and the President's House were struck out and the plan thus altered sent to the engravers, intending that work and the promulgation thereof to give the final and regulating stamp.

Washington made it plain where he stood. In 1797, he wrote to the commissioners in the following unequivocal terms:

That many alterations had been made from Major L'Enfant's plan by Major Ellicott with the approbation of the Executive, is not denied; that some were deemed essential, is avowed, and had it not been for the materials which he happened to possess, it is probable that no engraving from Major L'Enfant's draughts ever would have been exhibited to the public, for after the disagreement took place between him and the Commissioners, his obstinacy threw every difficulty in the way of its accomplishment. To this summary it may be added that Mr. Davidson[1] is mistaken if he supposes that the transmission of Major L'Enfant's plan of the City to Congress was the completion thereof; so far from it, it will appear by the message which accompanied the same that it was given as a matter of information only, to show what state the business was in, and the return of it was requested. That neither House of Congress passed any Act consequent thereupon; that it remained as before, under the control of the Executive, that afterwards several errors were discovered and corrected, many alterations made, and the appropriations, except as to the Capitol and the President's House, struck out under authority before it was sent to the engraver,

[1]One of the complainants.

intending that work and the promulgation thereof, were to give the final and regulating stamp.

The difficulties in dealing with L'Enfant will be illustrated by the story which is told of his manner of dealing with a family seat in the Carroll family which came within the range of his plan. The Carrolls, who were the noted Maryland family, were among the most important and most influential people in the community, and Daniel Carroll, a nephew of the commissioner of the same name, owned a mansion known as Duddington House, which stood on their old place on Capitol Hill, within the confines of the new city. As it interfered in some way with certain of L'Enfant's plans, he ordered the house to be torn down, and this without asking the authority of the Commission. Mr. Carroll naturally protested with vigour. L'Enfant was immovable; thereupon Mr. Carroll declared that he would appeal to President Washington, who was in the country. While he was engaged in making his appeal, L'Enfant assembled a body of labourers and had the house torn down. Naturally there was something of a stir over such prompt and unusual proceedings. In settlement of the matter, Duddington House was later rebuilt by order of the administration; but in a different situation, some little distance from its original site.

Notwithstanding the quarrel between Daniel Carroll and L'Enfant over matters in general and that of Duddington House in particular, the Carrolls were among his most patient and devoted of friends, and for many years during the latter part of his life Major L'Enfant found an asylum and a home beneath the roof of a member one of the branches of the Carroll family, William Dudley Digges, who owned a plantation of some six hundred acres in Prince George's County, above the valley through which winds the headwaters of the Eastern Branch of the Potomac, some six or eight miles above the city. Mr. Digges invited Major L'Enfant to be his guest, and doubtless to relieve him from a feeling of dependence upon him, requested him to lay out his grounds in a suitable manner. Whether, when the invitation was first delivered, it was expected that it would stand good for so long a time, or whether it was simply one of the instances in which, in the South, those who came to visit remained to reside, may not perhaps wholly be clear; at least L'Enfant remained an inmate of this hospitable mansion until in June, 1825, at the age of seventy, he passed away. He was buried in the old family burying-ground. His grave remained unmarked by any stone for nearly a century; but the spot was pointed out, encircled by a number of sheltering

cedars, and when in 1864 the estate passed out of the hands of the family which had previously owned it, and into the hands of the late Mr. George Riggs, all the bodies in the family burying-ground were removed, save two. One was the body of L'Enfant; the other rested in an unmarked grave of which tradition whispered that it was that of a gallant British officer named McKenzie, whom Mr. Digges had shot in a duel growing out of his attentions to the latter's wife. From time to time there was talk of removing the remains of L'Enfant and erecting a suitable monument. In his time, however, Mr. Riggs preferred to remain the custodian of his ashes and in 1870 he had a little chapel near his grave restored. In the year 1902, on the occasion of the celebration of the Founding of Washington, the interest of the public having been finally aroused in the fate of one to whom Washington City owed so much, the ashes of L'Enfant were removed to the National Cemetery at Arlington, where they repose, it is hoped forever, among those of other soldiers—some more famous, but none more gifted—honoured by the nation.

It is said that for many years, pacing the alleys of his refuge and sometimes, though rarely, walking abroad even in the avenues of Washington followed by several hunting-dogs, might be seen, leaning heavily on a staff,

a tall, melancholy figure, of distinguished appearance, dressed in a threadbare surtout and high, bell-crowned hat, and with eyes in which burned the light of mingled disappointment and resentment. This was Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, the designer of the plan of Washington.

Two fallacious traditions relating to the laying out and building of Washington City have circulated for many years and have been repeated so often that they have come almost to be established as facts, yet they can hardly have any foundation except the vague complaints of the disgruntled. One is that in laying off the city, the names of the Southern States were given to those avenues which at that time they conceived to be the most promising and prominent, while the names of the Northern States were given to avenues which at that time were supposed to be quite secondary. The second is, that owing to the affairs of certain speculators, including men of the highest position, in buying up and holding the lots to the eastward of the capitol where they believed the city would necessarily extend first, they frustrated their own wishes and forced the drift of the city toward the much less desirable section to the westward, and it was in some sort a pretty bit of poetic justice that the fashionable part of the city through their selfishness has grown up in the region which they despised.

Now as to the first tradition, a glimpse at the map will readily prove that it has no foundation. It would have been quite natural had the controlling element, which, against such tremendous opposition, located the capital city on the banks of the Potomac, given the names of the states which they represented to the best avenues; but as a matter of fact, no such system prevailed. There were three principal foci in the plan of Washington City as originally laid out. The sites of the capitol and of the President's house and of the circle now known as Washington Circle form these foci of the diverging or principal avenues. The chief one of them was laid out to connect the capitol with the President's house and to extend beyond them to lead to Georgetown, on the west, and to the Eastern Branch on the east. The honour of naming this avenue was accorded to Pennsylvania, and from that time to this it has always been known as "the Avenue." The state of Maryland was naturally given the avenue which was the extension of the turnpike from Baltimore to Washington. Virginia took the avenue lying to the southward, and substantially parallel to Pennsylvania Avenue, while to Massachusetts was given the corresponding avenue to the northward of Pennsylvania Avenue. New Jersey was honoured with the name of the avenue

passing by the capitol at right-angles to Maryland Avenue, and New York took the avenue passing by the White House through what became the most fashionable portion of the city. Delaware was assigned an avenue laid off by the capitol between Maryland and New Jersey avenues. Connecticut was given the avenue passing by the White House at right-angles to New York Avenue, while North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia had avenues assigned to them eastward of the capitol. New Hampshire was given the avenue crossing Pennsylvania Avenue at Washington Circle, with Rhode Island Avenue crossing them both at this point. Rhode Island Avenue was laid down to cross at Washington Circle, due no doubt to the fact that Rhode Island was the last state to ratify the Constitution.

Thus we find that, instead of these avenues having been named according to an inequitable system, due to the selfishness of the Southern States, as a matter of fact, the best one was given to Pennsylvania, and the rest were equally divided in such a way as to secure whatever advantages might accrue to passing by the capitol or President's house.

But it is alleged that it was the belief of the people who had this naming to do, that the city would be built to the eastward of the capitol rather than to the

westward, and that the expectation was that this would redound to the credit of the avenues lying toward the water, to the southward, and to the eastward of the capitol. This silly notion would do little credit to the far-sightedness of men like Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, and the other founders of the city; but, as a matter of fact, Mr. Hines, whose recollections of Washington show what a clear-headed man he was, and how tenacious his memory of matters relating to Washington City, declares that it was expected that the first ward, which lay to the westward, would first be built up, and this he substantiates by recalling the houses that were among the earliest built on Pennsylvania Avenue, west of the President's Mansion. The list, which goes back to the very earliest time, shows the growth of the city to the westward of the capitol to have been much greater than to the eastward, the high prices at which property in the latter region was held having caused the development of the city to the westward.

The facts show that the houses on Greenleaf Point "were mainly small frame houses built for the accommodation of workmen," and that the houses erected by Morris, Nicholson, and others, in pursuance of their contract of purchase with Daniel Carroll, were many of them never finished.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT SPECULATORS

SPURRED on by every incentive to carry through the task committed to them, the men in charge of laying out the district and establishing the capital lost no time in pushing forward the work. On April 15, 1791, the first cornerstone of the new district was laid with elaborate Masonic ceremonies at the southwest corner of Jones' Point near the mouth of Hunting Creek on the Virginia side, which as we have seen was the point of beginning in Washington's plan of September, 1790. The cession by Virginia was made December 3, 1789, but it appears that Congress did not take control of the district until 1801.

The commissioners began by calling the district the Territory of Columbia, a name which they a little later changed to the District of Columbia, and they likewise, at this early time, named the city, the City of Washington, a designation which is said to have been without Washington's knowledge or consent. However natural it must have been for him to be pleased by this honour,

he was as impregnable as Marcus Aurelius to the assaults of flattery. The people, however, recognized the propriety of giving this honoured name to their capital, and though there were some murmurs they were soon drowned in the universal acclaim.

By March, 1792, the plan had been sufficiently prepared, and arrangements had been advanced far enough for the commissioners to advertise for competitive designs for both the "President's House" and the "Capitol." They offered a prize for the successful design in each case, of $500 and a building lot, and many architects, and some who were not, competed for the prize. Their designs covered, as might have been expected, a wide range; but happily for the future of the capital city, in close touch with the commissioners and with the supervisory powers which knowledge and taste must always give, even where official authority is wanting, was a man who to other forms of genius added the genius of architecture. Among the designs for the Executive Mansion, which were submitted, was one by a young architect of Charleston, South Carolina, named James Hoban. True to the traditions of the country which his name bespeaks as that of his origin, he is said to have selected as his model the mansion of the Duke of Leinster in Dublin. This design was awarded the

premium, and the young South Carolinian, to whom we are indebted for the beautiful design of the White House, was engaged at a salary of one hundred guineas a year to superintend its construction.

For the capitol sixteen designs were submitted, not one of which was accepted. A little later, however, a French architect living in New York, Stephen L. Hallet, sent in a sketch of a design which appeared to the commissioners so great an improvement on the others that he was requested to complete it. Before this was done, however, an Englishman of West Indian birth who had lately come to America, Dr. William Thornton, and who was not an architect by profession, but, like Jefferson, was a man of taste and breadth of views, submitted to Washington and Jefferson a design which struck them as being so superior to anything else they had seen, that Washington requested its adoption and suggested that, as Thornton had no practical knowledge of architecture, the execution of the design should be entrusted to Hallet. This suggestion was promptly acted on by the commissioners, and to the great benefit of the country was adopted, and Hallet was appointed supervising architect at a salary of $400 per year.

On September 18, 1793, was laid with elaborate Masonic and civic ceremonies, the cornerstone of the capitol

of the United States. It was in the southeast corner of the old North Wing, now occupied by the Supreme Court. The rivalries which had existed so long over the selection of a site for the capitol whetted the enthusiam of the people of the region selected to the utmost keenness. They determined to make the occasion notable and they succeeded. Whatever could be done to add dignity to it was done. Washington, who had come South, timing his journey for the purpose, participated in the grand ceremonies and delivered an oration. The Grand Master of the Maryland Free Masons likewise delivered an address. The noted Alexandria Lodge, of which Washington was a member, contributed its share to the occasion, and after the ceremonies a grand barbecue was given under an "extensive booth."[1] The capitol had already been begun and the foundation appears to have been gotten fairly well under way prior to this time.

Even, however, with the purchases concluded, the surveys made, and L'Enfant's plan finished in all its beauty, the most difficult part still remained. To change a stretch of hill and dale, of field and marsh, into a city, was the herculean task which confronted the Govern-

[1] For the history of the capitol itself, the reader is referred to the monumental work of Mr. Glenn Brown, entitled, "The History of the United States Capitol."

ment and its agents, the commissioners. To accomplish this it was necessary to enlist public opinion and secure the active backing of the public, to be manifested by the purchase of lots, and the erection thereon of buildings; for after all, a city on paper, even when presented in such a striking way as the plans of L'Enfant's maps, is as unsubstantial as a dream. Half the country was as hostile as ever to the project, and secret intrigue was ready at any moment to break out and rear its head in open opposition. It was for this reason, at least in part, that L'Enfant's retention of his plan and his obstinate refusal to hand it over to the commissioners was regarded so seriously. As a matter of fact, it not only added greatly to their difficulties but endangered the final success of the whole plan of the Government. Without a proper map of the city, prospective purchasers would not be able to identify lots which they were expected to bid for and actual purchasers would not be able to identify lots which they had bought. The Government, under its agreement with the property holders, had secured, within the limits of the city, 541 acres of what were deemed desirable building sites, and 606 acres embraced in the streets and avenues. The total cost was said to be something like $37,000.[1]

[1] Forbes-Lindsay's "Washington," p. 76.

Preparations were made to hold the first auction sale on the 19th day of October, 1791, but, after extensive advertisement had been made, although public sales were held during three days, the projectors at the end faced the disheartening fact that in that time only twenty-two lots had been sold. L'Enfant's apprehension that the public would rush in and preëmpt all the desirable lots had proved a dream.

A year later another sale of public lots was held, and though every effort was made, at the end of the sale only thirty-four lots had been disposed of. Still undismayed, a third auction was held in September, 1793; but this time fewer lots were sold than before. Only thirty lots passed into the hands of the purchasers.

It was now clear to everyone that public auction was not the means by which to secure inhabitants for the new city. The President, therefore, authorized the commissioners to dispose of land by private sale. This appeared to give the necessary impetus toward awakening public interest in the new city. Within a short time, the great speculators, James Greenleaf, Robert Morris, and John Nicholson, had seized upon Washington as a promising field for one of their great speculations, and though the result was in the sequel

disastrous to them, and for a time appeared to be disastrous to Washington, the boom which they brought about, even with its subsequent collapse, proved a step in the development of the new city. It brought many investors there, stimulated their eagerness, and by opening streets and beginning buildings gave a semblance of advancement which attracted wide notice. Rivalry is the mother of Progress, and, as frequently in such cases, no sooner had the City of Washington been laid off and the door thrown open to investors than a gambling spirit manifested itself and speculation in its values became rife. Apart from the little ones, who "played at the shilling table" and speculated in corner-lots and small tracts, three names stand alone: the names of James Greenleaf, of John Nicholson, and of Robert Morris, with—after an interval—those of William Cranch and Thomas Law. Of them it has been said that "the affairs of Morris, Nicholson, and Greenleaf can be likened unto a fabric so compactly and complexly woven, as to be beyond finite skill to separate and sort the threads."[1]

"In the annals of the City of Washington, James Greenleaf," says Ellen C. Clark, the author of "Greenleaf in the Federal City," "in scheme and specula-

[1] "Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City," by Ellen C. Clark, p. 40.

tion, is first and foremost; in litigation the most persistent."[1]

The method adopted by the commissioners to raise money for the construction of the public buildings was, as stated, to sell lots at first by public auction, and this having failed, then by private auction. In a short time, however, the syndicate business—which has, to some extent, flourished in Washington ever since—came on the tapis. By an agreement in the autumn of 1793 (September 23d) the commissioners sold Mr. Greenleaf 3,000 lots at £25 current money per lot, to be paid in seven installments without interest, beginning May 1,

[1] John Nicholson had been Comptroller General of the United States at the early age of twenty-three, and the transactions in his private right are said to have been of such "menacing magnitude" that at the time of the public survey he owned, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 3,700,000 acres; and in a report made to the Commonwealth in 1806, it is alleged by a brother of Nicholson that he had indisputable right to one seventh of its surface.

Nicholson was accused, in the House of Representatives, of malfeasance in office and an impeachment trial ensued; but at the trial he was acquitted by the Senate.

Robert Morris, the great financier of the Revolution, even surpassed Nicholson. Millions of acres passed under his hand and stood in his name, and it is said that once, on his having applied to Washington to go into the North America Land Company, Washington not only refused, but remonstrated with him for speculating at his age, threescore. Morris replied, "I can never do things in the small; I must be either a man or a mouse."

Eventually, as is known, both he and Nicholson became absolutely bankrupt, and Morris, after having spent three years in a debtor's prison, was released to pass the rest of his life in poverty, living only on a small annuity of $1,500 which had been allowed to his wife by his creditors. When the smash came, it is said that Nicholson owed over $12,000,000. To such men, the speculation in the lands in the District of Columbia was a mere incident; but it bore its part in determining the drift of the city, and affected immeasurably its future history.

1794. The lots were to be sold alternately and a condition was attached that he would erect ten houses yearly, two stories high, covering 1,200 feet area, and that he would not sell before January 21, 1796, without a stipulation that on every third lot a similar house should be built within four years from date of sale. The agreement also contained further conditions as to subsequent sales, mortgages, etc. Whether Greenleaf was acting originally for his confrères, Morris and Nicholson, as well as for himself, is not clear; but within a short time he had arranged with them that each of them take a third interest, and a grand scheme had been launched, on their joint concern, to float a great loan in Holland; and on the twenty-fourth day of December, 1793, a further agreement was entered into with the commissioners whereby it appeared that Greenleaf had, under authority from Morris, purchased on his behalf the same number of lots and upon the same credit and conditions for building and reselling except that the price was £35 per lot instead of £25, an advance of 40 per cent. in three months. Real estate was booming in Washington. Certain modifications of the building requirements were contained in the new agreement. It was provided that the lots should include all of Notley Young's land and that of Daniel Carroll, within the branches of the

canal, and a limitation was placed on the selection of lots bounding the proposed National University. It seems that in this purchase Nicholson was likewise jointly interested.[1]

The Holland scheme appears to have advanced in a promising way; for within six months, the commissioners, Messrs. T. H. Johnson, David Stuart, and Daniel Carroll, the last the uncle of one of the original owners of the land, agreed with the three promoters to grant them a certificate in fee for one thousand lots out of Notley Young's land and five hundred lots out of another portion of the land, on their giving bond for the amount of the purchase money and for the performance of the building contract in order that the loan which was in negotiation in Holland for some £3,000,000 might be effected. And that the promoters were business men would appear from the fact that this placing the lots in Holland at the rate of £100 per lot was an advance of 300 per cent. over their original purchase, six months before.

Some idea may be had of the method of speculation in those days, from the prospectus of the North American Land Company, to which reference has been made, formed in the year 1795 (February 20), of those three

[1] "Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City," by Ellen C. Clark, pp. 68, 69.

colossal speculators, Morris, Nicholson, and Greenleaf. The capital stock of $3,000,000 conveyed land to the company at 50 cents an acre, 6,000,000 acres in all, ranging through the states of Pennsylvania, Virginia, the Carolinas, Kentucky, and Georgia. What part of it was on paper alone will, perhaps, never be known. Much of what was on the surface of the earth was in the wilderness and some of it is wilderness to this day. Yet they might have given points to the most enthusiastic of modern promoters, for their alluring prospectuses valued it at £100 per acre. In the same prospectuses the guileless purchasers were assured that the proprietor of back-lands "gives himself no other trouble than to pay the taxes which were inconsiderable," and is given to understand that all they have to do is to wait until settlers pitch upon them and improve them, and then the proprietors will receive a price which will fully repay their original advance with great interest.

It requires little experience of the world to know that such vast undertakings as those of the three great promoters would soon be enmeshed in inextricable complications, and that when so entangled they would be sure to fall afoul of each other. At least, this was what soon happened, they having been forced into bankruptcy and imprisoned for debt, with everything

swept away from them. Before the new capital was actually moved to the District of Columbia, they were waging relentless war on each other. Even from the narrow precincts of a debtors' prison they attacked each other, and Morris, from his prison, wrote to Nicholson of Greenleaf, that he and Nicholson had been sued by him or somebody for him in every instance where he believed he could bring suits, that he had injured the sale of their property by cautioning all against buying it, and he had pursued him in Europe and had injured them in every way he could, and he closes with the question, "Ought we not to bring suits for the balance due us for damages, etc., so as at any rate to keep him where he now is?"[1]

We have a glimpse of the proprietors of Washington in the "Personal Recollections of the Stage," by William B. Wood, who, it is said, knew the Prime Street Prison by closer knowledge than mere outside observation:

> One side of Prime Street Prison was neatly laid out as a garden and well kept, affording an agreeable promenade for the luckless inhabitants of this Bastile.
>
> Mr. Morris appeared cheerful and in the politest manner returned my salutation; but continued his walk, dropping from his hand at a given spot a pebble at each round until a certain number which he had were exhausted.

[1] "Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City," by Ellen C. Clark, p. 171.

While I offer this little picture of a morning walking party, on one side of the prison, I must not forget a riding party on the other, nearest to Fifth Street, in this department, which I was occasionally permitted to overlook. Mr. James Greenleaf with Mr. Nicholson, for many years controller of the finances of Pennsylvania, who had been the partner of Mr. Morris's enterprises, and with them in his misfortunes, had the privilege of forming a small circle, and indulging himself with a rapid ride, on a fine horse each morning at the period alluded to. It was quite amusing to observe with what skill habit had enabled him to make those swift évolutions, within so very limited a space.[1]

Not content with the 6,000 lots originally purchased, it appears that the three promoters were so carried away that they eventually secured over 1,200 lots more, besides some 1,341 lots which Greenleaf himself secured individually. The ownership and transfers and retransfers of these lots are too complicated to interest the general reader; but it would appear that at this time the public lots numbered 10,136 and the original proprietors held an equal number, and that the total number of lots held by the three promoters was 60 per cent. of the public lots, 25 per cent. of the lots originally reserved by the proprietors, and 42 per cent. of all. How it finally worked out, the general reader would hardly have

[1] Wood's "Personal Recollections of the Stage," cited in "Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City," p. 169.

the patience to study. After a period of colossal kiting, in which purchase prices were reckoned in the millions, and shares were reckoned in the ten thousands, the whole business went to smash, and the new city of Washington was left in the mud, with long rows of half-completed houses standing in the old fields with the frames boarded up, until it had recovered from the catastrophe and a new era had dawned.

In the meantime entered on the scene, Messrs. Thomas Law, George Walker, and William Cranch.

Washington approved of the first sale to Greenleaf, and so he wrote to his Secretary and friend, Col. Tobias Lear, shortly after the execution of the agreement. He, however, disapproved strongly of the second sale on such a large scale, to Greenleaf, which was made a few months later, and he expressed himself frankly on the subject to Daniel Carroll.

Of the first sale, he says to Lear:

> You will learn from Mr. Greenleaf that he has dipped deeply in the concerns of the Federal City, I think he has done so on very advantageous terms for himself, and I am pleased with it notwithstanding on public ground; as it may give facility to the operations at that place, at the same time that it is embarking him and his friends in a measure which, although it could not well fail under any circumstances that are likely to happen, may be considerably promoted by men of Spirit with large Capitals.

In his letter to Carroll on this subject, he stated the ground of his former approval of the first sale, which was that matters seemed to be "in a stagnant state," and something was necessary to be done in order to put the wheels in motion again; but as to the second sale, he mentions that Greenleaf, who had bought at the price of $80 per lot, had sold a large number at nearly $300 per lot, and he stated that, inasmuch as the speculator was laying the foundation of immense profits to himself, it might be asked, "Why are speculators to pocket so much money? Are not the Commissioners competent to make bargains?"

Although the building of the city had thus been got under way, the progress was so slow and the difficulties which beset this progress so great that its friends were in perpetual anxiety lest something might occur to rally the opponents of the Potomac site and enable them, by uniting their forces, to defeat it after all. The disposal of the lots at the first public sale had been a disappointment to the far-sighted friends of the measure. It was due in part to the circulation of the hostile rumour that, whatever might be said, Congress would never leave Philadelphia, and the money put into the Washington scheme would be thrown away.

Even when it was begun, the construction proceeded

so haltingly that Washington was fain to write to the commissioners that unless greater activity should prevail their whole previous labour might be lost, and later he felt himself compelled to insist on their taking up their residence on the site. The great difficulty was the want of funds. It had been hoped that before the fund contributed by Virginia and Maryland—$120,000 by Virginia and $72,000 by Maryland—should be exhausted, the sale of lots would supply the balance needed to complete the public buildings. This expectation, however, was doomed to disappointment. The hopeless embarrassment of the Greenleaf-Nicholson-Morris Speculating Syndicate and its subsequent insolvency complicated the business beyond extrication, and a large quantity of the land was thrown back on the hands of the commissioners, and the ruin of the entire enterprise stared them in the face. Before the walls of the capitol and the White House were up, the commissioners were compelled to appeal to Congress, in 1796, for an appropriation to complete these structures. Congress was generous and authorized the commissioners to negotiate a loan of $300,000 to be guaranteed by the Government, but notwithstanding the guarantee, the money was not to be had on the terms proposed, and Washington himself was compelled to take

the field to raise the necessary funds to meet the loan. Finally, at his request, the State of Maryland took up two thirds of the loan, stipulating, however, that the commissioners, "two of whom were men of means," should add their individual guarantee to that of Congress. In 1798, we find Congress again appealed to by the commissioners for a further loan, and again Congress appropriating a loan of $100,000. Again also we find the State of Maryland lending them one half that sum, and again she requested private security for its repayment.

Though these difficulties retarded the progress of the new capital, work on the public buildings proceeded at least steadily, and not only were the President's house and the capitol being pushed forward to completion, but two other public buildings were also erected: the one for the Treasury Department on a portion of the site of the present Treasury Building, and the other for the War Office on the central portion of the present State, War, and Navy Building. They were simply brick structures, two stories high, containing about thirty rooms each, and every brick laid was regarded as an anchor to the Seat of Government, and so it has been from that day to this.

Under the building regulations adopted and the conditions attached to the sale of lots, it was necessary for

purchasers to build fairly substantial houses. This fact was productive of both good and evil results. The houses which were erected were solid enough to stand as tokens of the permanency of the city; but it prevented the growth of less substantial houses, or less costly structures which might have contributed greatly to the convenience and the comfort of the inflowing population. The substantial houses were built with a view, not to immediate convenience, but to drawing the growth of the city in their direction, and those put up by different speculators were often as far as possible from the houses of others. For example, James Greenleaf, who arrived in the new district about the time of the commencement of the capitol and quickly made his immense purchases of the commissioners and of Daniel Carroll, of Duddington, was familiar with towns whose prosperity depended on shipping, and he conceived the idea that the first development would be along the shores of the Eastern Branch or Anacostia, where deep water would attract commerce. He made his main purchases of the commissioners and of Daniel Carroll, whose property lay in that part of the district, and entered into an agreement with Carroll by which he was to put up twenty buildings of a certain type which were to be finished on or before the twenty-sixth day of September,

1796. These buildings were on what came to be known as Greenleaf's Point, the land jutting out at the junction of the Anacostia River with the Potomac proper, the point on which the Arsenal afterward stood. At the same time or a little later he undertook the erection of what came to be known as the "Six buildings of Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest."

Meanwhile Morris and Nicholson, whom Greenleaf had associated with himself, were constructing buildings in other parts of the broad and uninhabited district. One of them was known as the "Wheat Row" on Fourth Street, between N and O streets, Southwest, and was perhaps the first block ever erected in the district. Greenleaf, as has been stated, soon found himself, through his immense operations, involved in an inextricable tangle of difficulties, and wound up or was wound up with a tremendous quarrel with his two coadjutors, to whom he sold his interests, with the result of further complicating their affairs and leading to fresh quarrels and interminable feuds. Eventually, it may be said in passing, Greenleaf "succeeded in reducing his interests to some kind of order and by dint of nearly forty years of legal process saved from the ruin sufficient to enable him to pass his later years in comfort."[1]

[1] Forbes-Lindsay's "Washington," p. 81.

Meantime, Greenleaf had become involved with Daniel Carroll, growing out of his contract to erect twenty houses by the twenty-sixth day of September, 1796.

At the same time Greenleaf's assignees were facing the danger of forfeiting the property on which the twenty houses were being erected through their inability to get them finished in time to comply with their contract. In boom times, everything soars, and though the district was now becoming thronged with labourers and mechanics, prices were also rising, and the difficulty of getting materials to meet all the dreams of multiplying speculators had so increased that there was imminent danger of the bubble's bursting and the boom's collapsing.

In July, 1795, Morris laments "that money was so cursedly scarce that nothing will command it," but finally, a sufficient amount was found for William Cranch, the agent of the Syndicate, to offer Daniel Carroll $8,000 in Bank of the United States notes, if he would extend the time limit of the building contracts of the twenty buildings for one year. This offer Mr. Carroll promptly refused and in face of his demand of his pound of flesh the speculators found themselves obliged to drop such futile negotiations and apply

themselves to carrying out their contract. It was a close graze; but it is said that fifteen of the houses were ready three days before the time limit expired, and the others, barely three hours before. Meantime, other blocks of buildings were going up in other parts of the city. On the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue at Nineteenth Street, seven buildings were erected by General Stewart and Major Moore, of one of which, that upon the corner, it is said that it served as the Executive Mansion after the despoilment of the White House by the British; another housed the State Department and in 1801 was the residence of John Marshall and James Madison.[1]

Besides these purchasers and builders who have been named, there were a number of others, among whom the one who came subsequently to be the most prominently identified with the development of Washington City was Thomas Law, the youngest son of the Bishop of Carlisle and brother of Lord Ellenborough, the Lord Chancellor of England, who, having made a great fortune in India, came to this country, caught by the spirit of speculation, and settled in Washington as the first in line of the nabobs who have made their money in other regions and have found Washington a successful

[1] Forbes-Lindsay's "Washington," p. 93.

place in which to "blow it in." These purchasers, having cast their fortunes in sections of the city widely separate, soon began to quarrel among themselves and with the authorities, each claiming that his interests were being neglected and the drift of the city was deliberately being turned in the direction of his rival through improper means[1] a complaint which, though arising many years ago, may still be heard echoing through the avenues of Washington.

The name of Robert Morris, one of the original triumvirate of speculators in the region of the as yet unbuilt city, is still known to thousands by reason of his great public services in the Revolutionary period, whereas the names of his partners and coadjutors are forgotten or are known only to the student of that period. Yet they were as much alike in their dealings so far as they related to the new Federal City as if they were brothers suckled at the same breast, and in certain important particulars, their immediate successors were men of the same order, men of large vision who saw everything through the magnifying haze of enthusiasm, and were as often deceived themselves as they deceived others. Of the second group of speculators, the men who followed Greenleaf, Morris, and Nicholson, the two most

[1] "Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City," by Ellen C. Clark, pp. 154–55.

noted were William Cranch, a great nephew of Greenleaf, who became his agent, and Thomas Law, the Englishman. The former was a man of a high order of ability, and rose to be of great note. Under John Adams, he was appointed a Justice of the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia and under Jefferson was made Chief Justice of that Court. He was also the first reporter of the Supreme Court of the United States. Yet, so far as the Federal City was concerned, the more notable of the two men was Thomas Law.

Thomas Law arrived in this country in the summer of 1794, and with an instinct for adventure and a love of gaming, he promptly became one of the most enthusiastic of the promoters of the great new capital of Utopia. That the modern habit of running after foreigners is no new thing in our country is established by Law's experience. Likewise that the foreign lions do not always come in best in the end. Law had good letters, which brought him in touch with the best people in this country, and he appears to have hardly landed before he was taken up by the best society, with which he was amply entitled to associate. But he also seems to have been caught by the whirlwind whose vortex at that moment was the unbuilt city on the banks of the Potomac. Even before he saw the "lay of the

land," he took an option on a large number of squares from James Greenleaf, and his heart and mind were declared by him to be so full of Washington City that he informed Greenleaf that he might say that he had rather sell his horses or books or anything than part with a foot, at present, of Washington City. He did not come to Washington until the following winter, when one might have thought that the mud of the newly laid off and unpaved streets might have clogged his enthusiasm; but on the contrary he appears to have gone forward with unabated courage, and even to the day of his death, long afterward, he seems to have remained a cheery, affable, indeed jovial, high-spirited gentleman, undaunted by any difficulties and unsoured by any reverses. Among his earliest ventures was one in which he was eminently successful; for in little more than a year after his arrival, he was (on the 20th day of March, 1796, at the seat of David Stewart, one of the commissioners of the District of Columbia) married to Miss Custis, "the grand-daughter of the Lady of the President of the United States."[1]

It is sad to relate that this marriage, which for a time appeared so happy and so suitable in every way, came eventually to an unfortunate end. After a brief pe-

[1]Forbes-Lindsay's "Washington," p. 99.

A typical view of what was then known as Washington City in the quiet days before steam, electricity, and rapid transit.

riod in which Mr. and Mrs. Law were among the most distinguished hosts in the new capital, Mr. Law left for England on business and on his return discovered that he had lost his wife's affection and moved to Vermont, where, after a reasonable period, he sought and obtained a divorce.

Law, having set his affection on Washington, appears to have been stopped by no obstacles, however great they may have appeared; he seems to have flung his heart over the fence, and gone over after it. His correspondence with James Greenleaf and others at this time shows how he had been carried away by the alluring prospect on the banks of the Potomac and how enthusiastically he entered into the speculations going on there. Toward the close of 1794, we find him writing to Greenleaf every few days on matters relating to the development of the Federal City, or more properly to the speculation in the lands on which it was to rise. When Greenleaf proposed to go abroad to float his great loan, or interest otherwise foreign capital, Law wrote a letter of introduction to his friend, William Blane, of London (on December 5, 1794) stating that Mr. Greenleaf was "a most respectable man of abilities and integrity," and begging him to "pay particular attention to his statements." "The Presi-

dent," he adds, "confides in him and you will find him a man intelligent and understanding. I will give you particulars in my next—it is sufficient, however, to observe that if a few of us sit down in Washington City, that numbers more will join us" and that "land worth 1,000 dollars now, will soon rise to 1000£ Stg." Expressing his sorrow at the "embarrassments at home," he says that he had only once congratulated himself on taking this step in time, for, he adds, "Here all the people are prospering. The land only wants men. If a man with cash is only prudent he cannot help but benefit." To reassure his friend, he informs him that "Mr. Greenleaf is not an American, therefore you may have impartial accounts from him." That Law was able to convey his enthusiasm to his friends at a distance is shown by a letter which he wrote to Greenleaf, ten days later, in which he informed him that he had been "desired by two gentlemen, of East India, one acting for David Scott, the Great Bombay merchant, East India Director, and friend of Dundas, and an acqu'e of mine, to let them have a share in my Washington purchase," and he inquires of Greenleaf whether he was resolved not to part with any more lots on the same terms."[1]

[1] "Greenleaf and Law in the Federal City," by Ellen C. Clark, p. 94.

Scott, "the great Bombay merchant, East India Director, and friend of Dundas," seems to have come himself to Washington sometime later; but there being no Miss Custis to blind his eyes, the city of Washington was too much of a wilderness to allure him, and he turned his back and went his way. Meantime, Thomas Law wrote his sister, Lady Rumbold (December 15, 1794) in a letter of introduction sent by Mr. Greenleaf, suggesting that she herself should come over and settle, and giving his belief that "if Tom came over for three or four years, he could double his fortune to a certainty." He gives a touch of Washington in December which is as true to-day as it was then. "The climate," he says, "has been delightful hitherto,—we have now and then had a frosty night; but the sun shines all the day." It seems strange that Mr. Law should have been so carried away by the allurements of Washington when he had such a clear idea of the perils of speculation in other regions, as he showed he had when, less than a month later, January 8, 1795, he wrote to Greenleaf of Morris's speculations. "He borrows," he says, "at dreadful interest and sells disadvantageously, like a desperate gambler, to recover what he has lost." . . . "He has, I know, a great fortune; but no fortune can stand his constant drains."

This is a reference in part to one of Morris's schemes to join the Susquehannah to the Schuylkill, as to which Law suggests that it would be "more advantageous to the United States to pour the productions into the Chesapeake than into the Delaware," adding that, "300,000 dollars have already been spent." He closes this letter with the statement, "You may say that I had rather sell my horses or my books or anything than part with a foot, at present, of Washington City."

Law had selected his property mainly in the direction of Greenleaf's Point, and when he built his home, he chose for his sight a pleasant seat to the southeast of the capitol. In the struggle which soon began between the owners of property to the westward and to the eastward, Law's larger interests lay in the latter direction. However wild his expectations were, he had the assuredness and the address to secure from Greenleaf, in the course of his transactions with him, a mortgage for the large sums turned over to the Greenleaf Syndicate which eventually saved him, and it is stated that when their affairs went to pieces and they were all involved in a common ruin, Law was the only creditor who received his advance in full while no other creditor got even a "moderate percentage."

By the middle of 1795, Law and Greenleaf were

assailing the new commissioners, Messrs. G. Scott and Dr. William Thornton, for showing favouritism to the western part of the city and neglecting the eastern side for their own "personal interest."

On July 11, 1795, Greenleaf, who had received a complaint from his assignee, Law, that the Commission was acting against his interests, wrote Edmund Randolph, the Secretary of State, as follows:

In obedience to your request that I would commit to writing what has been advanced by me in conversation with you on the subject of the Federal City, I now, with all due respect, do say that Messrs. G. Scott and W. Thornton, Commissioners of the Federal District, do possess property both in and near the Federal City, on the Georgetown side of it; that I do most firmly believe that, conceiving it to be for their personal interest to promote the benefit of that part of the city, to the detriment of that part lying on the Eastern Branch, they do designedly and intentionally discourage everything that may tend to promote the growth or respectability of this last mentioned part.

I do further say that certain propositions have been made to those Commissioners by Mr. Thomas Law for the improvement of the city and for facilitating the transfer of property to him with perfect security to the public, to neither of which he has yet received reply, though promised him, and that this alone prevents him from commencing very important improvements, and I do further say, that governed by the conviction that the said Commissioners have constantly and will continue to oppose every obstacle to my operations in the City tending to the benefit

of the Eastern part of it, and that they will withhold from me such facilities as the nature of the object requires and that can with reason and propriety be asked, that I have been induced to divest myself of my whole interest in the city and to withdraw my personal exertions to the promotion of that establishment, except as regards the improvement of one square for my future residence.

I have the honor to be with all possible respect,

JAMES GREENLEAF.

The Board promptly explained that they had only been waiting for Mr. White to take his seat, and then wrote Mr. Greenleaf a letter calling on him to substantiate his charges of "fraud and partiality or be considered a false and infamous accuser."

At this Greenleaf rather "took water," for he wrote denying that he had charged them with fraud and explaining his letter at some length. George Walker, another purchaser, soon added his complaint to those of the others who had Eastern property, and November 16, 1796, wrote the commissioners a tart letter in which he set forth his grievances and threatened suit to compel them to do their duty faithfully and impartially. He says:

Notwithstanding the haughty and arrogant manner with which you affect to treat the original proprietors at the East end of the City, you will please to recollect that you and even your master,

the President, are only public servants, bound by certain limits which will be found too strong for you to break through.

He charges them with spending a large sum of the public money in building a stone bridge in Georgetown for the benefit of speculators. He published a caution or warning in the Washington *Gazette*, to prospective purchasers, not to buy this property.

Finally even Washington himself declared their "discontents" had become "irksome" to him.

James Greenleaf and his two partners, Morris and Nicholson, were soon in a furious quarrel, both in the courts and in the press, in which latter, however the merits may have been, "Master Jimmie Greenleaf" carried off the palm, in bitterness and pointed sarcasm. He wrote on April 22, 1797, as follows:

Under such circumstances, I may confidently retort your aspertions and menaces with contempt and defiance; and though the lure of your arts and the contagion of your example, may have undoubtedly led me into great errors (injurious, perhaps to many individuals, for whom I am anxious to prepare all the reparation in my power), I trust that I have never yet been so debased by prosperity, or misfortunes, as to render it hazardous, on any point of reputation, or in any form of inquiry, to engage in a comparison with you. My veracity is, at least, untainted by any abuse of public trust; my conscience will never be disquieted by the embezzlement of a widow's or an orphan's portion; and I hope

I shall never be so callous as to smile, in pomp and luxury, on the penury and ruin which I have inflicted on others.

Be assured then, Sirs, that a competition with you in a court (where alone I shall ever again consent to answer you) or an appeal to public opinion, has no terrors for me; I have been despoiled of my property; but my integrity, and that peace of mind, which is the inseparable concomitant of integrity, you can never destroy.

JAMES GREENLEAF.

CHAPTER V

WASHINGTON IN BUILDING

WE are indebted to a clever, clear-headed, clear-sighted Irishman for what speaks on its face as a truthful picture of Washington City within four years of its being laid out. Mr. Isaac Weld was an Irishman, who, in the year 1795, feeling, as he says, "that when war was spreading desolation over the various parts of Europe, when anarchy seemed to be expanding with frightful progress from nation to nation, and when the storms that were gathering over his native country in particular, rendered it impossible to say how soon any one of its inhabitants might be forced to seek for refuge in a foreign land," was induced to cross the Atlantic, "for the purpose of examining with his own eyes into the truth of the various accounts which had been given of the flourishing and happy conditions of the United States of America, and to ascertain whether in case of future emergency any part of those territories might be looked forward to as an eligible place of abode."[1]

[1] "Travels in North America," by Isaac Weld. Preface, p. iii.

Arriving in America, he travelled, as he says, pretty generally throughout the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, and afterward passed into the Canadas, desirous of obtaining clear information as to the state of those provinces, and determining from his own immediate observations how far the present condition of the inhabitants of the British Dominions in America might be inferior, or otherwise, to that of the people of the states. That he was capable both of observing with assuredness and reporting with accuracy the conditions existing in the regions through which he travelled, may be readily agreed to by anyone who reads his account of the conditions which fell under his eyes. With nothing of the picturesqueness and little of the humour and consequent exaggeration of these later travellers, such as Dickens and Mrs. Trollop, he was as close an observer and a more accurate reporter.[1]

After giving his views of Philadelphia and Baltimore, touching off not only the appearance of those cities but the manners of the people with whom he came in contact with a keenness which carries its own proof,

[1]His whole account of his travels, contained in a series of letters not originally intended for publication, is most interesting, because he relates what he has seen and then gives his impressions with a clearness which could only have happened through friendship.

he reaches Washington, which, he says, is indifferently termed "the City of Washington" and "the Federal City." Having passed over roads so bad that he declared they were worse than any he had ever met with, he adds that they were worse than in any other state of the Union, due perhaps to the fact that he had not then travelled in any other state except Pennsylvania, and not very far in that.

After telling of having stalled in a sulky though drawn by a powerful horse, he mentions that the same fate had befallen General Washington not long before, who,

> as he was going to meet Congress, a short time before, was stopped in the very same place, his carriage sinking so deep in the mud that it was found necessary to send to a neighboring house for ropes and pulleys to extricate it.

And he closes this account with the natural reflection,

> that the Legislature of Maryland can be so inactive and not take some steps to remedy this, which is one of the principal routes in the state and the great road from North to South and to the City of Washington, is most wonderful.

On his arrival in Washington, after having given a little account of the history of its selection as the federal capital, he goes into an account of its superiority

over most other cities in the country; owing to its central position and its promise of water-navigation with the great West, it would be superior in the future to that of any other city in the country. He then proceeds to describe the city as "laid out on the neck of land between the forks formed by the Eastern and Western branches of the Potowmac." He had been informed of the method of obtaining title to the land as well as that by which funds would be raised for the building of the city. He found the plan of the city, which he states had been "drawn by a Frenchman, by the name of L'Enfant," to be on a scale well suited to the extent of the country, 1,200 miles in length and 1,000 miles in width, of which it was to be the metropolis.

The streets, as he records,

run North and South, and East and West; but to prevent that sameness which naturally ensues, from the streets all crossing at rightangles, a number of avenues are laid out in different parts of the city, which run transversly and in several places where these avenues intersect each other, are to be hollow squares. The streets which cross each other at rightangles are from 90 to 100 feet in width and the avenues 160 feet. One of these is named after each state in the Union and a hollow square will also be allowed to each as a suitable place for statues, ornaments, etc., which at a future period, the people of any one of these states might wish to erect to the memory of the great men that might appear

in the country. On a small eminence, due West of the Capitol, is to be an equestrian statue of General Washington.

He next explains briefly,

that the Capitol is now building on the most lofty spot of ground in the city, which happens to be in a very central situation. From this spot, there is a complete view over every part of the city and also over the adjacent country.

The plan on which this building is begun, he considered grand and expensive, and reports that "the expense of building it is estimated at a million dollars."

He next mentions the "House for the residence of the President" as standing "Northwest of the Capitol at a distance of about one and one-half miles," and as "situated upon a rise of ground not far from the Potomac and commanding a most beautiful prospect of the river and of the rich country beyond it," and as having one hundred acres of ground toward the river, "left adjoining the House for pleasure grounds." South of this, he says, there is to be a large park or mall which is to run in an easterly direction from the river to the capitol. The buildings on either side of this mall are all to be elegant in their kind. Among the number, it is proposed to have houses built at the public expense for the accommodation of the foreign

ministers, etc. The details are all accurate and show that he had obtained his information at first hand. He notes the building regulations which had been published, by which it was

> settled that the houses should be built of brick or stone, the walls to be thirty feet high and to be built parallel to the line of the street, either upon it or withdrawn from it as suited the taste of the builder.

However, he adds that numbers of wooden habitations have been built; but the different owners have all been cautioned against considering them as permanent. They are to be allowed for a certain time only and then are to be destroyed. At that time, as he notes,

> the only public buildings being carried on were the President's house, the Capitol and a large hotel. The President's house, which is nearly completed, is two stories high, and built of free-stone. The principal room in it is of oval form. This is indeed the handsomest building in the country and the architect of it is much extolled by the people who have never seen anything superior; but it will not bear a critical inspection. Many persons find fault with it for being too large and splendid for the residence of any one person in a Republican country and certainly it is a ridiculous habitation for a man who receives a salary that amounts to no more than £5625 Sterling per annum; and in a country where the expenses of living are far greater than they are even in the City of London.

The hotel, which he described as "a large building built of brick, ornamented with stone, and standing between the President's house and the Capitol," was in the beginning of the year 1796 roofed in, and every exertion made to have it finished with the utmost expedition. It was, he says, anything but beautiful. The capitol, at the same time, was raised only a very little way above the ground.

Having thus disposed of the public buildings, he proceeds to give a description both of the condition of the city itself and of the attitude of the people of the country toward it in the spring of 1796:

The private houses are all plain buildings; most of them have been built on speculation, and still remain empty. The greatest number, at any one place is at Green Leaf's Point, on the main river, just above the entrance of the Eastern Branch. This spot has been looked upon by many as the most convenient one for trade; but others prefer the shore of the Eastern Branch, on account of the superiority of the harbor, and the great depth of the water near the shore. There are several other favorite situations, the choice of any one of which is a mere matter of speculation at the present. Some build near the Capitol, as the most convenient place for the residence of the members of Congress, some near the President's house; others again prefer the West end of the city, in the neighborhood of George Town, thinking that as trade is already established in that place, it must be from thence that it will extend into the city. Were the houses that

have been built, all situated in one place, they would make a very respectable appearance; but scattered about as they are, a spectator can scarcely perceive anything like a town. Excepting the streets and avenues, and a small part of the ground adjoining the public buildings, the whole space is covered with trees. To be under the necessity of going through a deep wood for one or two miles, perhaps, in order to see a next door neighbor, and in the same city, is a curious, and I believe, a novel circumstance. The number of inhabitants in the city in the Spring of 1796, amounted to about five-thousand, including artificers, who formed by the far the largest part of that number. Numbers of strangers are continually passing and repassing through a place which affords such an extensive field for speculation.

In addition to what has already been said upon the subject, I have only to observe, that notwithstanding all that has been done, at the city, and the large sums of money which have been expended, there are numbers of people in the United States, living to the North of the Potowmac, particularly in Philadelphia, who are still very adverse to the removal of the seat of the government thither, and are doing all in their power to check the progress of the city, and to prevent the Congress from meeting there at the appointed time. In the Spring of 1796, when I was last on the spot, the building of the Capitol was at a standstill for want of money; the public lots were at a very low price, and the Commissioners were unwilling to dispose of them; in consequence they made an application to Congress, praying the House to guarantee a loan of $300,000 without which they could not go on with the public buildings, except they disposed of the lots at a great disadvantage, and to the ultimate injury of the city; so strong, however, was the opposition, that the petition was suffered to lie

on the table unattended to for many weeks, nor was the prayer of it complied with it until a number of gentlemen, that were very deeply interested in the improvement of the city, went round to to the different members and made interest with them in person to give their assent to the measure. These people who were opposed to the building of the City of Washington, maintain, that it can never become a town of any importance, and that all such as think to the contrary have been led astray by the representations of a few enthusiastic persons; they go so far even as to assert, that the people of the Eastward will never submit to see the seat of government so far removed from them, and the Congress assembled in a place little better than a forest, where it will be impossible to secure information upon commercial points; finally, they insist, that if the removal from Philadelphia should take place, a separation of the States will inevitably follow. This is the language held forth; but their opposition really arises from that jealousy which narrow-minded people in trade are but too apt to entertain of each other when their interests clash together. These people wish to crush the City of Washington while it is yet in its infancy, because they know that if the seat of Government is transferred thither, the place will thrive, and enjoy a considerable portion of that trade which is centered at present in Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York. It is idle, however, to imagine that this will injure their several towns; on the contrary, although a portion of that trade which they enjoy at present should be drawn from them, yet the increase of population in that part of the country, which they must naturally supply, will be such, that their trade on the whole will, in all probability, be found far more extensive after the Federal City is established than it ever was before.

A large majority of the people in the United States is desirous

that the removal of the seat of Government should take place; and there is little doubt that it will take place at the appointed time. The discontents, indeed, which an opposite measure would give rise to in the South, could not but be alarming, and if they did not occasion a total separation of the Southern from the Northern states, yet they would materially destroy that harmony which has hitherto existed between them.

Fortunately for those interested in the earliest glimpses of Washington City, we have a little volume published half a century ago containing the early recollections of Washington City, by Christian Hines, whose home in his boyhood was in Georgetown and who was connected with the development of Washington from the time George Washington stepped it off.

Mr. Hines lived to be over ninety, in the full possession of his faculties, which were of an unusual order. So clear was his memory and so deep his interest in the Federal City that he rendered the invaluable service to the city of not only giving a clear and simple description of the external aspect of the new town; but of setting down the location of every house as he remembered it and the name and business of its occupant.

Through his eyes, should we look more closely, we should find, about the year 1797–98, at least two racecourses laid out before us, one ranging to the southward of Washington Circle, somewhere between F and K

and Twenty-first and Twenty-third streets; while another, "Dr. Thornton's Little Race-Course for the training of his horses," lay a little southeast of Franklin Row—somewhere between there and Jenkins's Farm. This Farm, he states, stretched across the present location of Seventh Street, beginning "somewhere about H Street North, and 7th Street West, and extending in a Northeasterly direction as far as the old Poor House." (*Page 34.*)

He gives a picture of Washington as it appeared at that time.

As I stood at the little Seventh Street bridge, on my way to or from Georgetown, as I have already stated, by looking to my right, I could see the North Wing of the Capitol just rising, as it were, out of the ground; and, on looking to the left, could see the President's House, perhaps half a story high. These were the only public buildings then being erected. The avenue itself was almost impassable for carriages of any kind. The only place that had anything like the appearance of a town or village was F street, between Fifteenth street and St. Patrick's Church. Beyond that there were no houses except a few shanties for laborers, near Blodgett's Hotel, where the General Post Office now stands, and a few scattered old frame houses on the old fields, North of F street. There were at that time only three streets or parts of streets, between Georgetown and the Capitol; . . . 1st, K street, from the lower bridge to the Six Buildings, where it entered the Avenue, 2d, the Avenue, from the Six Buildings, including

K street, to Fifteenth Street, and from Fifteenth street along F to St. Patrick's Church. From there there were no more streets, except a road, which continued on from the little branch over E street, near where Dr. Borrows now resides, in nearly a straight line, on high ground North of the Avenue, until it reached the Tiber not far from the foot of Capitol Hill, etc. These were the only streets in Washington which were open; in fact, there were no houses to form streets.

We should find these farms owned for the most part by small landowners of Scotch-Irish stock, though toward the southeast where the capitol was to rise we should see Duddington House, the seat of young Daniel Carroll, which was to be pulled down by Major L'Enfant and to be the cause of serious trouble.

To the extreme west, on the slopes of what was then known as Camp Hill from the tradition that Braddock encamped there, but which came to be known later as Observatory Hill, where Matthew F. Maury was later to lay the foundation of the modern science on which is founded the charting of the currents, both of the seas and of the skies, would lie the small struggling hamlet of Hamburgh. North of these, near what was to be later the corner of K and Eighteenth streets Northwest, would be the Moore House, the farm stetching from Seventeenth Street West, and northward to the top of the hill.

To the east of Hamburgh lay the farm which was owned by "obstinate Mr. Burns," whose farm extended along the river, taking in all the lands now occupied by the southern part of the White House grounds, with a little dormer-windowed farmhouse of one story and a half set in trees toward the foot of Seventeenth Street, where the old Van Ness and later Tom Green mansion used to stand with its vague tradition connecting it with the Lincoln conspiracy.

North of David Burns's would be the farm of the Pearces, with its farmhouse standing near the present site of St. John's Church and its orchard covering the better part of Lafayette Square, while its little graveyard lay near the southwest corner of that square.

Yet farther east of Franklin Square lay the little yellow farmhouse of Mr. Jenkins, with its farm extending eastward to about Seventh Street and northward to about where the old Poor House stood, while to the southward lay the farmhouse occupied by James Burns, one of the numerous young brothers of David Burns; but owned by Davy himself, who under the the law of primogeniture, had fallen heir to all the land his father had owned.

Still turning eastward we should find a farm be-

yond Jenkins's Farm with an old dwelling house and a tobacco house on it. To the northward of this were the White Oak Slashes, all in woods to the boundary street along the northern limits of the city.

Yet eastward lay an old farmhouse owned by Chloe Coombs, bounded on the north by the White Oak Slashes. About Judiciary Square was another small farm occupied by "Mr. Brown," while farther to the southeastward lay two small frame farmhouses.

In the region lying to the southwest of the White House and of the Washington Monument, and southeast of the capitol, was what Mr. Hines speaks of with respect as the mansion house occupied by Mr. Robert Brent, the first mayor of Washington City.

At this time, where F Street now runs, lay a region subsequently termed F Street Ridge, a ridge which was the watershed of that part of the country, the rainfall turning to the northward into the stream which ran into the Tiber, and to the southward into the valley afterward crossed by Pennsylvania Avenue.

Without doubt, Washington continued as long as he lived to take a deep interest in the promotion of the capital city, although motives of delicacy must have restrained him from any acts which might have been construed into an appearance on his part of exerting

his influence actively in matters exclusively under the control of officers of the Government.

Hines, the annalist of the beginning of the capital city, tells of seeing him twice in his boyhood, on visits to the new capital. "The first time," he says, "was when he came up the river in a boat and landed at the lower bridge at the foot of K Street North, and stopped with his nephew, Thomas Peter, Esquire." The last time, he thinks, was "in the year 1798, when he crossed the Potomac in a ferry-boat near the Acqueduct Bridge. On each side of Water Street from High Street, Georgetown, to the bridge, the citizens were ranged on either side while General Washington walked between them uncovered and bowing to the people as he passed along." He recollected that the Georgetown College boys, who were all formed in line on the north side of the street, "dressed in uniforms consisting in part of blue coats and red waistcoats," presented a fine appearance and seemed to attract the attention of the General very much. "The General was received with salutes by the Volunteer Companies of Georgetown, and we find that he made the natural impression of "a very large and tall man."

Unhappily for the city, as for humanity, within two years after this visit, he, to whom the location of the

capital city was due more than any other force, passed away, just as the year and the century were passing. The opposition to the site on the banks of the Potomac was still alive, and in the great struggle between the Federalists and the Republicans the location of the national capital was frequently one of the bones of contention.

The work languished and the banked fires were at any time liable to break forth. Happily the influence of Washington still survived, and in the universal mourning for the Father of his Country none ventured, for some time at least, to move in the open against the city which bore his name and to which he had devoted so much toil and thought. It was not for nearly ten years that a serious movement was set on foot to move the seat of government from the spot which Washington had selected, and although it at one time appeared formidable, it eventually failed.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRANSFER OF THE GOVERNMENT

John Adams's Administration

HITHERTO the history of Washington City has been a story of sectional conflict mingled with tribulations continually sounding like the surf beating on a distant strand, from the stress of which came the federal capital as a sort of civic jetsam and flotsam washed up on the banks of the Potomac. Or else it has been the story of legal conveyancing and mechanical construction; rash speculation and wild expectations, destined to be dashed to pieces on the rocks of insolvency amid which the beginnings of the new city, destined to be great and glorious, were laid on the forest-clad hills or in the ready swamps of a rural region, hardly more than a wilderness.

One would be fortunate, indeed, to be able to express from these dry details of political factions, legal routine, and material construction enough of the picturesque to lay properly the foundation of the romantic human history of the beautiful Capital of the West.

Now begins a new chapter, still dealing in part with the material growth and prosperity of the city "of magnificent distances" and "majestic silences"; but informed with a life which at this period was just beginning its civic development as representative of the distinctive life of America.

It was in the year 1800 that the Government actually moved to Washington. The story goes that a single packet sloop brought all the furniture of the departments, besides several large boxes and several small ones, which contained the archives of the Government, and that "fifty-four persons, comprising the President, the Secretaries, and the Clerical force, represented the personnel of the Government." This story, which has been declared to rest on the statement of the "oldest inhabitant," has been controverted by Forbes-Lindsay, the author of the admirable work on "Washington, the City, and the Seat of Government," who declares it absurd on its face and quotes the "Recollections" of Christian Hines to establish his position.[1] Hines says that the vessels in which the furniture, etc., was brought landed and discharged their cargoes at Lear's wharf, and

as the vessels were unladen, their contents were carried away to

[1]Forbes-Lindsay, p. 112.

the War and Treasury offices, the only offices which were built at the time. Some of the furniture was stored away in the stone warehouse, and afterwards taken away in wagons, it being too bulky to remove in carts. Wagons were rather scarce in Washington at that time and our cart was engaged with others in removing the books, papers, and boxes, etc. I still remember that some of the boxes were marked "Joseph Nourse, Registrar."[1]

Most of the personnel of the Government moved to Washington by private conveyance, taking such routes as they pleased, the Congress having authorized the President to anticipate the original transfer of the Government by six months to Washington, and the President having issued an order to the "Several Heads of the Departments, to make the most prudent and economical arrangement for the removal of the public offices, clerks and papers, occurring to their best judgment, as soon as may be convenient, and in such manner that the public offices may be opened in the City of Washington for the dispatch of business by the 15th of June."

Mr. Adams himself left Philadelphia May 27, 1800, and made a leisurely and circuitous journey to the capital by way of Lancaster and Fredericktown. He arrived June 3d, and according to the *Sentinel of Liberty*,

[1] Christian Hines, "Recollections of Washington," p. 12.

he was met on the boundary line of the district by "a large crowd of respectable citizens on horseback" and escorted to the Union Tavern in Georgetown. Here he remained until June 14th, when, all the executive offices having been removed to Washington, he set out for his home in Massachusetts.

The War Office was soon removed to a house which stood on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue between Twenty-first and Twenty-second streets, nearly opposite the tavern kept by the father of the famous Peggy O'Neil, and it shortly afterward burned down, the fire having caught from a joist running through from the adjoining house where someone had died the day before and a large fire had been kept burning. Christian Hines tells of being at the fire (which was in 1800, and not, as he remembered, in 1801) and he recalls seeing Mr. Adams in the line of citizens formed to hand buckets from the pump to the engine, which was the means then used in the absence of the modern high pressure system, or even of a line of hose. The President remained in the line until some gentleman urged him to withdraw for fear he might take cold.

The Post Office Department leased quarters at the corner of Ninth and E streets Northwest, "close by the great Hotel" (Blodgett's). In this building the As-

sistant Postmaster lived with his family. The total rent was $600, of which he suggested the Government should pay $400. Even after the Government had been moved to what its members considered the "wilderness" along the Potomac River, little provision had been made for their reception. Indeed, as many of them complained, the situation did not admit of their comfortable accommodation. The offices were in the modest brick buildings flanking the President's house about half way between the capitol and Georgetown. The Congress met and held its sessions in the only partially finished wing of the present stately capitol, its members finding accommodations as they could in the only good hotel, a building which had been erected "about forty rods from the capitol," in the boarding-houses which had sprung up, or in the better appointed houses of entertainment in Georgetown. Between the capitol and the President's house with its neighbouring offices, ran a highway which had suddenly been transformed into an avenue, its sides dotted in places by newly erected structures with wide stretches of forest and field between them. In one place, taking in a stretch between the foot of Capitol Hill and the present Central Market, the ground was so low that the water had been deep enough for boats to ply and

fish nets to be drawn, and even after the road had been turned into an avenue, the water still flooded the place. We have, as happens, a vivid description of the new capital at this time by pens abundantly able to picture it as it was. The members of the new President's families, official and domestic, have left for us with much precision the impressions made on them by their new home. And if it be urged that it could hardly be expected that the opponents of the Potomac plan would be likely to take an unprejudiced view of the new city, it may be answered that the personal discomforts incident to the situation which no pen could picture would be likely to more than offset any exaggeration of general features. It takes little imagination to picture the waste of mud which the new city must have presented to its early civic inhabitants in the rainy season. Our first picture deals, however, with the dusty rather than the muddy season.

On the Fourth of July, 1800, the then Secretary of the Treasury, Oliver Wolcott, moved perhaps by the recurrence of the national festival, wrote to his wife, giving an account of his surroundings:

> The City of Washington, or at least, some part of it, is about forty miles from Baltimore. . . . The Capitol is situated on an eminence which I should suppose is near the center of the immense

country here called the City. It is a mile and a half from the President's House, and three miles on a straight line from Georgetown. There is one good tavern about forty rods from the Capitol, and several other houses are built and erecting; but I do not perceive how the members can possibly secure lodgings, unless they will consent to live like scholars in a college, or monks in a monastery, crowded ten or twenty in a house, and utterly secluded from society. The only recourse for such as wish to live comfortably, I think will be found in Georgetown, three miles distant over a bad road in Winter, as bad as the clay grounds near Hartford.

I have made every exertion to secure good lodgings near the office; but shall be compelled to take them at the distance of more than half a mile. There are, in fact, but few houses at any one place, and most of them small, miserable huts, which present an awful contrast to the public buildings. The people are poor and as near as I can judge, they live like fishes, by eating each other. All the ground for several miles around the City, being in the opinion of the people too valuable to be cultivated, remains unfenced. There are but few enclosures, even for gardens, and those are in bad order. You may look in almost any direction over an extent of ground nearly as large as the City of New York, without seeing a fence or laborers. . . . Greenleaf's Point presents the appearance of a considerable town which had been destroyed by some unusual calamity. There are fifty or sixty spacious houses, five or six of which are occupied by negroes or vagrants, and a few by decent looking people; but there are no fences, gardens, nor the least appearance of business. This place is a mile and a half South of the Capitol.

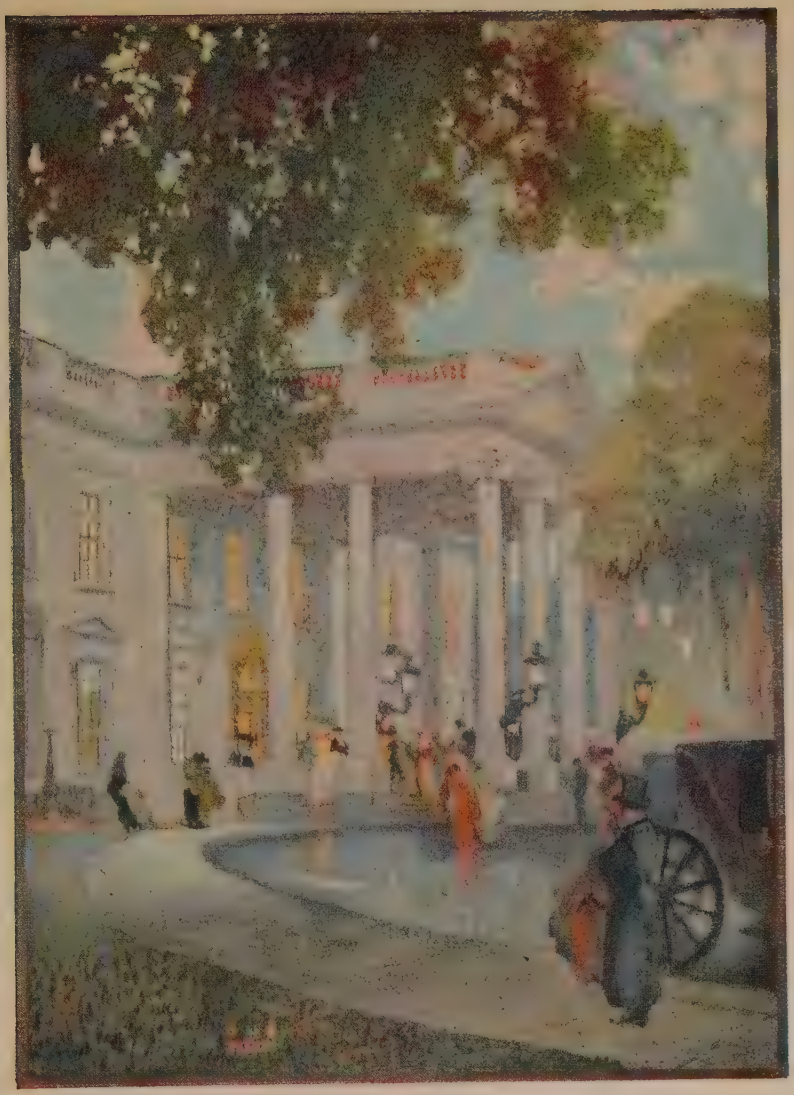
Another gifted observer has left us a picture. Mrs. Adams, wife of the President, John Adams, having

moved here from a well-kept and delightful home in the neat New England village of Quincy, also wrote letters giving a description of the new city as it presented itself to her.

She writes:

> I arrived here on Sunday last, and without meeting any accident worth noticing, except losing ourselves when we left Baltimore, and going eight or nine miles on the Frederick road, by which means we were obliged to go the other eight through the woods, when we wandered two hours without finding a guide or a path. Fortunately a straggling black came up to us, and we engaged him as a guide to extricate us out of our difficulty; but woods are all you see from Baltimore until you reach the city, which is so only in name. Here and there is a small cot, without a glass window, interspersed through the forest, through which you travel miles without seeing a human being. In the City there are buildings enough, if they were compact and finished, to accommodate the Congress and those attached to it; but as they are, and scattered as they are, I see no great comfort in them. If the twelve years in which this place has been considered as the future seat of government had been improved as they would have been in New England, very many of the present inconveniences would have been removed. It is a beautiful spot capable of improvement, and the more I view it, the more I am delighted with it.

She writes again to her daughter of the difficulties under which she laboured, amid her new surroundings, however grand they may have appeared from the out-



A glimpse of the White House, which was in all essentials restored by President Roosevelt to its original colonial simplicity and beauty.

side: she complains that the grounds were not fenced off, the house was unfinished, and there was difficulty in heating it, the main stairway had not been built, nor the bells hung.

> To assist us in this great castle and render less attendance necessary, bells are wholly wanted . . . not one single one being hung through the whole house, and promises are all you can obtain. If they will put me up some bells and let me have wood enough to keep fires, I design to be pleased. . . . But surrounded with forests, can you believe that wood is not to be had because people can not be found to cut and cart it? The house is made habitable; but there is not a single apartment finished. We have not the least fence, yard, or other convenience without, and the great unfinished Audience room,[1] I make a drying room of, to hang up the clothes in. The principal stairs are not up and will not be this Winter.

The ceremoniousness of General Washington's levees had in their time been the subject of much discussion and of no little criticism. His successor continued the ceremoniousness in his public receptions, which were limited to a reception on New Year's Day and a reception on the Fourth of July. Rules of precedence were laid down and solemnly followed. The guests were limited to persons of official station, and to a very few individuals of established reputation or who might

[1] Now known as the East Room.

present suitable letters from those whose introduction entitled them to consideration. Full dress was required at the receptions and the President is described with "his round ruddy face, framed by a powdered wig," wearing "a black velvet suit, white vest, knee breeches, yellow gloves, silk stockings, and silver knee and shoe buckles." "The guests formed in a circle, when the President went around and conversed with each one, after which they came up, bowed and retired."

If, however, the President was not a man of impressive appearance, he was a man of impressive force, and he surrounded himself with men also impressive in their intellect and character. In his Cabinet were John Marshall, Secretary of State; Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury; Samuel Dexter, Secretary of War; Benjamin Stoddert, Secretary of the Navy; Joseph Habersham, Postmaster General; and Theophilus Parsons, Attorney General.

The Congress also was filled at this time with men of national reputation, many of whom had made their mark on the history of the country as far back as the Revolution. In the House members sat with covered heads, as is still done in the House of Commons, a practice which was not discontinued until 1828.

Snuff was generally taken by persons of both sexes,

and receptacles for snuff were placed in the House of Representatives and were kept replenished by the officials. The dress of the period was still that which has been described as worn by Mr. Adams at his levee. Many, perhaps most, men of the time wore wigs, and the hairdressers' shops soon began to hold a conspicuous place along the Avenue, where they seem to have been a popular rendezvous of public men who were accustomed to call and exchange more or less dishevelled wigs for fresh ones, which had been put in order for them and hung in glass cases against the walls. Here also they exchanged the news of the day according to immemorial custom.

The Congress assembled in Washington for the first time on November 17th, having present by the roll call forty-four Representatives and thirteen Senators. Others arrived in the new capital later. It was a momentous period for Washington as well for the rest of the country at large, for the issue of the election was not yet known and on its fate hung possibly the question whether the Government should be fixed in Washington or should be moved elsewhere.

The life here must have been both uncomfortable and dull for the Members and we find many hints of its being so in the letters of the period. Efforts were soon

made to relieve the tedium. Within only one week after the Congress assembled we find in the new *National Intelligencer* an advertisement of the "Washington Dancing Assemblies," with the statement that the first assembly would be held at Mr. Stilles' Hotel on the 25th at half after five o'clock. A day or two later we learn that 100 persons attended, including characters and members of the Federal Legislature who arrived early.

There appeared at this time the first notice of a bookstore established in Washington—on New Jersey Avenue, near the capitol. For yet many years to come, however, Georgetown was the emporium for the members of the new Government, and there many of them lived, and there throughout the early administrations in Washington much of the shopping was done.

Here the *Times and Potowmack Packet*, which had been started in 1789, furnished the news, together with considerable correspondence and reflections on political and academic subjects. A little later the Washington *Gazette* made its appearance, and here the great speculators and other rivals aired their grievances and abused each other to their hearts' content. A library called the "Washington Library" was, it appears, formed in 1797, and about this time, Miss Ann Vidler opened a

day school for young ladies at Greenleaf's Point, and according to her programme undertook to teach them "reading, plain, open, and tambour work."

So far had the city advanced by the beginning of June, 1801, that on the first day of that month was opened—"first door west of President's square on Pennsylvania Avenue"—a circulating library, under the enterprise of James Lyon, later the publisher of the *National Magazine*, which he described as "a political, biographical, historical and literary repository."

Albert Gallatin, in writing to his wife from Washington under date of January 15, 1801, gives the impression which the new city makes upon him:

> Our location is far from being pleasant or even convenient. Around the Capitol are seven or eight boarding houses, one tailor, one shoemaker, a washing-woman, a grocery shop, a pamphlets and stationery shop, a small dry-goods shop, and an oyster house. This makes the whole of the Federal City as connected with the Capitol. At the distance of three-fourths of a mile, on or near the Eastern Branch, lie scattered the habitations of Mr. Law, of Mr. Carroll, the principal proprietors of the ground; half a dozen empty houses, a very large, but perfectly empty warehouse, and a wharf graced by not a single vessel. And this makes the whole intended commercial part of the City, unless we include in it what is called the Twenty Buildings, being so many unfinished houses, commenced by Morris and Nicholson, and perhaps as many undertaken by Greenleaf, both which groups lie at a distance of half a mile from each other,

near the mouth of the Eastern Branch and the Potomac, and are divided by a large swamp from Capitol Hill and the little village connected with it. I am at Conrad and Munn's, where I share the room of Mr. Varnum, and pay at the rate, I think, including attendance, wood, candles, and liquors, of $15 a week. At table, I believe we are from twenty-four to thirty, and was it not for the presence of Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Brown, would look like a refectory of monks.

It appears a natural if not necessary incident to the building of capitals that the walls should be laid, at least metaphorically, in blood. Certainly from the time of Rome this has been the case, and possibly the confusion of the tongues of Babel relates to the same fact. The rule was not violated in the case of the new capital of the West. L'Enfant had quarrelled with everyone and had been set aside to spend the remainder of his life in warfare with everyone who had had any connection with the planning of the Federal City. Only Jefferson, as he wrote long afterward, "yearned after" his old friend, and endeavoured vainly to get him to accept the professorship at West Point, the offer of which he had helped to procure for him.

Not only, however, in the laying out of the Federal City did hostilities arise and quarrels break out, but in the erection of one of the two public buildings the same unfortunate though natural result ensued. Hallet

quarrelled with Thornton, charging him with stealing his ideas and plans, until he had to be dismissed from the position of architect: and George Hatfield, who was appointed in his place to superintend the completion of the north wing, quarrelled till he likewise was disposed of. Then James Hoban, the young architect of the President's House, was appointed to take charge of the construction.

Notwithstanding these dissensions the capitol continued to rise, however slowly, on the design in which Stephen Hallet, the Frenchman, and Dr. William Thornton, the Englishman, each had a part, with James Hoban, the Irishman, as it appears, called in as a practical man to superintend the construction of its foundation. Whatever his part was, Doctor Thornton, who was a man of taste, and indeed of genius, continued the work with much enthusiasm under many difficulties. No man connected with the building of Washington—not even Jefferson himself—had a more universal genius than Thornton. One friend (Benjamin Ogle Tayloe) says of him,

> He had a well-earned reputation for letters and taste . . . and he was a wit, a painter, and a poet, well acquainted with the mechanics and the Arts; his company was a complete antidote to dulness.[1]

[1] Glenn Brown's "History of the United States Capitol," vol. I, p. 82.

He received in 1792 the Magellanic medal conferred by the American Philosophical Society, as a distinction for his book on the "Elements of Written Language." He published papers on Medicine, Astronomy, Philosophy, Finance, Government, and Art, as well as on Language. He claimed, in a pamphlet published in 1810, to have been the "first to apply steam to boat propulsion," giving the credit to Fitch as the inventor of the application of steam to navigation. He asserts that Fulton was indebted to him for many valuable suggestions, having seen his drawings in the Patent Office in 1806, and finally claimed that Fulton's death was due to worry caused by the strength of his pamphlet.

He is said to have built in 1793 the only block of houses which Washington ever erected in this city, a building on North Capitol Street between B and C, where the Hotel Kenmore now stands. He designed Madison's country residence, Montpelier, in Orange County, Virginia, and he was the architect of the well-known Octagon House in this city which he built for Colonel John Tayloe in 1801[1]—a mansion which was destined to become famous, not merely because of the gracious hospitality long dispensed therein, but because,

[1] Glenn Brown's "History of the United States Capitol," vol. I, p. 86.

after the burning of the White House, it became for a time the home of the President of the United States, who there signed the Treaty of Ghent. Happily it has survived to the present time.

With the building of the White House, James Hoban managed well enough; but in the case of the capitol it was quite otherwise. No such splendid structures had ever been built on the Continent, and it was natural that ambition should have been aroused by this opportunity to achieve fame by linking one's name with the most magnificent architectural work yet attempted on American soil.

In the early part of 1803, the city took a step forward. Thomas Jefferson had become President by the narrow margin of eight votes over Adams, and after an attempt by Burr, who standing for Vice-President had, on finding his vote identical with Jefferson's, attempted to secure the Presidency. This bold attempt having been defeated by a single vote, Jefferson assumed the authority and personally directed the details of the work of advancement of the capital. He selected a supervising architect, as it were, though the title perhaps was wanting, by the name of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, an engineer of some renown, who had come to this country from the West Indies seven years before, and

who had shown ability as the engineer of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company. He was to receive a salary of $1,700 per year and was to be subject only to the personal orders of the President. Happily for the beauty and magnificence of the capitol, Latrobe, like Jefferson, was a man of classic tastes, and the two worked together to an admirable end.

In the brief biographical notes of this gentleman, he is described as the one architect in America, which may have meant that he was the only highly educated and scientifically trained architect. But, however this was, Jefferson, who had an eye for genius, engaged him to take up the work on the capitol, and go over the plans of Hallet and Doctor Thornton. Latrobe had met Doctor Thornton in 1789 as he was going to Philadelphia, in pursuance of his professional engagements, and according to the former, their relations had never been wholly cordial. It is quite possible, from his own story, that the more fully trained architect held it over the less scientific gentleman to a degree which a man of spirit would not be likely to tolerate. Certainly his letters betray, if not arrogance, at least a want of conciliatoriness not likely to produce harmony in their professional relations.

The following is a letter which Latrobe addressed to Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, dated at Washington, February 27, 1804:

To the President of the United States—
Dear Sir:

I judged very ill in going to Dr. Thornton. He in fact told me that no difficulties existed in his plan but such as were made by those who were too ignorant to remove them. And though these were not exactly his words; his expression, his tone, his manner and his absolute refusal to devote time to discuss the subject, spoke his meaning even more strongly than I have expressed. I left him with an assurance that I should not be the person to attempt to execute his plans, and had I been where I could have obtained immediate possession of pen and ink, and paper, I should have directly solicited your permission to resign my office. I, however, owe too much to you to risk by so hasty a step, the miscarriage of any measure you may wish promoted, and I shall devote as before, my utmost endeavors to excite the disposition in the committee to which I am summoned to-morrow morning, in favor of the appropriation. In respect to the plan itself it is impossible to convey by words or drawing, to the mind of any one that impression of the practical difficulties in execution which twenty years' experience creates in the mind of the professional man. I fear I have said too much for the respect I owe to your opinion, though much too little for the force of my own conviction. The utmost praise I can ever deserve in this work will be that of *la difficulté vaincue*, and after receiving your ultimate direction, all my exertion shall be directed to gain this praise at least. My wish to avoid vexation, trouble, and enmity

is weak compared to my desire to be placed among those whom you honor with approbation and friendship.

If you, therefore, under all circumstances, conceive that my services can still be useful, I place myself entirely at your disposal. In order to pass my account it will be necessary to produce a regular appointment from you to my office. May I beg you to give the necessary directions for this purpose. I ought to leave Washington on Wednesday morning. I am, etc.

That Latrobe was himself a man of large conception and quick apprehension as well as of taste and skill, may be judged by the ability and cleverness with which he carried out one of Jefferson's suggestions, in the designing of the Cornstalk Columns in the lower vestibule in the entrance below the old Senate chamber, now the Supreme Court Room. These Cornstalk Columns are among the show details of the capitol. They are usually spoken of as Jefferson's Cornstalk Columns and the idea was undoubtedly Jefferson's. It appears, however, from the correspondence between Jefferson and Latrobe, that Jefferson had spoken to Latrobe of the lack of individuality in our public buildings and suggested his "conventionalizing some of our native vegetation in proper columnar designs." No doubt Indian Corn was specifically referred to, as it is possibly the most beautiful of native crops indigenous to America. On this hint, Latrobe seems to have acted in designing the

curious and interesting columns representing bundles of cornstalks, with the ear and half open husks forming the capitals. In a letter dated August 28, 1809, to Jefferson, Latrobe writes of them as follows:

> I have packed up and sent to Richmond, to be forwarded to Monticello, a box containing the models of the columns for the lower vestibule of the Senatorial department of the North wing of the Capitol, which is composed of ears of maize. . . . These capitals, during the summer session obtained me more applause from the members of Congress than all the works of magnitude or difficulty that surround them. They christened them "Corn-cob capitals"; whether for the sake of alliteration I cannot tell; but certainly not very appropriately.

It was not likely that with Latrobe's point of view he would get on amicably with a man like Thornton, who was not only an artist in his way, but was a man of consideration, and what was more to the purpose, was accustomed to be treated as such, being a gentleman of high standing, of wealth, and an influential commissioner of the district by appointment of Washington himself.

Accordingly we soon find Messrs. Thornton and Latrobe at loggerheads and Thornton in a letter to the Congress of January 1, 1805, shows that he was able to

give Mr. Latrobe a Roland for his Oliver.[1] After declaring that previous to Mr. Latrobe's appointment the latter had often complimented him on his plan of the capitol, he says, "I can not easily conceive why previous to his appointment I should hear nothing but approbation of my plan, and after his appointment nothing but condemnation."

The quarrel continued long, each gentleman setting forth his contentions and his grievances in letters addressed to high officials of the Government, to the Congress, and to the public. Finally Latrobe appears to have succeeded in his plan, at least to the extent of making great changes in Thornton's plan and design which he criticised unsparingly.

He pays a tribute to Jefferson's part in the work which, even making allowance for the language of compliment, natural then as now, where Presidents are concerned, casts an unmistakable light on the universality of Jefferson's genius. Latrobe says:

> The warm interest which the President has taken in everything that relates to the design, arrangement, and management of the work, and to that impluse which a mind by whom no field of art or science has been unexplored gives to all the agents he employs, more is due than delicacy permits me to express.

[1]Glenn Brown's "History of the United States Capitol," vol. I, p. 35.

One direction which Jefferson gave to Latrobe was that he should deviate as little as possible from the plan approved by Washington.[1] Latrobe complains in his letters to John Lenthall, who was clerk of the works, of his trouble in obtaining the consent of the President in making certain changes in Thornton's plan, but "the majority of the suggestions made by Jefferson were approved by Latrobe."[2]

Notwithstanding the dissensions and contentions of the various architects and superintendents, the stately building grew, however slowly, through the joint promotion of many minds. Laid down by men of large views, from the beginning were called to its construction and embellishment the best intellects and gifts which could be furnished not alone by America, but by the world; the list, furnished by Mr. Brown, of artists who lent their genius to its embellishment, is an imposing one.

The incoming of the Virginia Presidents with their fostering friendship gave an impulse to the advancement of the new capital city. Sharing the benefits of their sincere good will, the capital became more firmly estab-

[1]Latrobe's Pamphlet, November 26, 1806, cited in Brown's "History of the Capitol," p. 40.

[2]Lenthall was killed by the falling of an arch in the staircase hall in September, 1808.

lished and took a long step forward. Mr. Jefferson's zealous personal interest in the work of development was a powerful agency, and his efficient labours in its behalf advanced the capital along practical lines. He not only pushed forward the work of the steadily rising capitol, but extended his interest to the city at large.

With a view to compensate somewhat for the loss of the beautiful groves which once crowned the hills and filled the valleys where the new city was laid down, in which he had taken such a delight, he designed the plan for planting the avenues with trees, to which we owe to-day the beauty of this capital city, and he personally superintended the planting along Pennsylvania Avenue of rows of Lombardy poplar, which he selected because of its rapid growth as a tree to give shade to that great stretch of open roadway.

Business now began to be pretty brisk in Washington. People were thronging in and "selected such lots as would best suit the business they were engaged in respectively. Some settled at the Navy Yard; a few about the Capitol, and others about the Treasury Office as far down F Street as St. Patrick's Church at 10th St." This locality was the most thickly settled at that time.[1]

[1] Hines's "Recollections," p. 9.

In the *National Intelligencer* of October 24, 1802, is found an account of the work which had been done up to that time on the capitol and also on the "President's House." From this account may be readily inferred some of the troubles which appear to have attended the erection of these public buildings.

Under the head of "Public Improvements" it says:

Ever since the removal of the sittings of the Congress from Philadelphia to this city, the Senate have occupied their own chamber in the North wing of the Capitol, the only part of this building which has been tolerably completed. In this wing the offices of the House of Representatives have also been kept; a part of it has been appropriated to the use of the courts of Justice of the District and of the United States. Of the wing intended for the future accommodation of the House of Representatives the lower walls of the interior were carried up about ten feet above the natural surface of the ground; and the lower part of the internal area of the hall raised to the height of about 20 ft. Over this area, which is of an elliptical form, a temporary roof had been erected which was to render it capable of accommodating the members with tolerable convenience, though at a very great distance from their offices in the North wing.

In this state the work remained at the close of the session when Mr. Latrobe of Philadelphia was appointed to the direction of the public buildings. In the month of April he began to make the necessary arrangements for completing the South wing of the Capitol building.

On examining the walls it was found necessary to pull down all

of them. For though above five feet thick, and to appearance strong, they consisted of two external casings, of thin masonry; inclosing small stone and rubbish loosely thrown together, with scarcely any adhesion; and so extremely bad were the materials that they could be of little use even in rebuilding the work in a more substantial manner. That part of the building in which the House are accommodated and which is part of the design . . . was found on opening the walls for examination, to have been executed in the same manner, but as it was absolutely necessary, if possible, to preserve this part of the work during the present session, it has been suffered to remain standing, though cracked and spread to a considerable extent, and it has been secured by strong timber, in such a way that no possible danger need be apprehended.

Another circumstance also delayed the commencement of the work. A considerable mass of foundation wall had been laid down in no way corresponding to the wall already built, which in its external appearance, at least must be an exact copy. All this work was taken up; and the exterior walls having been removed the whole has been rebuilt in the most solid manner and of the best materials which could be secured. In the opinion of good judges no public work in America promises more permanence than that which has already been erected here.

Upon the new foundation walls, the superstructure of the wing in freestone has proceeded up to two-thirds of the height of the lower story in the same style of execution.

In the North wing, means have been used to make the Senate chamber warm; for during the several days of last Winter it was almost impossible to hold the session on account of the extreme

cold. Air and light have also been admitted into the cellar story; and such parts of the floor as had given away on account of defective construction or had decayed, by confined and foul air, have been rendered perfectly safe.

Although the late appropriation contemplated the completion to a certain extent of the President's House, nothing has been done to lay out inside that building, excepting in putting up the stair-case, finishing an additional bed chamber, in digging a new wall, and some repairs to the roof, the leakiness of which has already damaged several walls and injured the furniture.

In the light of other facts, this account might almost appear to have been given by the new architect, who had just been taken on. At least it seems to have represented Mr. Latrobe's views.

By the end of Mr. Adams's administration, Washington had become sufficiently advanced for theatrical representations to take place there.

The first play that appeared was in 1801 in Blodgett's Hotel, which stood on the block south of the present Patent Office, where until recently the general Post Office stood. The building was at that time not finished, but a temporary floor was laid with rough boards, and rude benches formed the seats.

Such was the eagerness to see a play that Hines, with other boys like himself, climbed up from the floor below oftener than once and, using a workman's bench

as a ladder, removed one of the planks of the floor in order to gain access to the theatre.[1]

It was in this building that later on the 13th Congress met, on September 19, 1814, after the capture of Washington and the burning of the capitol. The building was at that time used for a Government Post and Patent Office and is said to have been saved through the exertions of Dr. William Thornton, who was at that time in charge of it, and was able to persuade Ross and Cockburne, the British officers, that the destruction of the patent models and records would be a serious loss to science.

It is said that an officer had ordered a gun to be turned on the Patent Office building just as Thornton rode up. The latter sprang from his horse in front of the gun and demanded:

> Are you Englishmen, or Goths and vandals? This Patent Office is the depository of the inventive genius of America, in which the whole civilized world is concerned. Would you destroy it? If so, fire away and let the charge pass through my body.[2]

Georgetown already boasted an institution of learning which, although it was at that time only an academy,

[1] Hines's "Recollections."

[2] Glenn Brown's "History of the United States Capitol," vol. I, p. 83.

was destined to become one of the important educational institutions of the future country.

The Roman Catholic Church had, it is said, from the first establishment of the Colony of Maryland under one of its distinguished sons, projected the founding therein of a great Catholic institution of learning. The very beginnings of Maryland had been under the charge of the zealous Jesuit fathers, less renowned possibly, but not less devoted, than those with whose fame is linked the fame of the great Northwest.

It is claimed that Fathers Andrew White and Ferdinand Poulton came to this very place and preached the gospel to the Indian tribes of the Piscataways and the Anacostans, and that they converted the Emperor and Empress of Piscataway and united them in Christian marriage in the presence of Governor Calvert and certain of his worthies, who came in great state from St. Mary's to attend the ceremonies. Father Poulton was sent from England as Superior of the Maryland Mission in 1638, and had the wisdom among his first acts "to project a seat of learning as the hand maid of religion in Maryland."[1]

The English Provincial of the Jesuits in reply to him declared that the hope of establishing the college which

[1] History of Georgetown College, p. 3.

he held forth was embraced by him with pleasure. Decades and even generations had passed since that date. Academies had been founded, had been broken up and had been founded again, through their zeal.

The academies of the Wicomoco, of Newtown Manor, and of Bohemia Manor had risen and passed, and now, generations after, when the seat of government was about to be fixed on the north bank of the Potomac, the successors of these early Fathers, with that wise prevision which appears to be characteristic of their Church, fixed upon perhaps the most commanding eminence of this region; a bold headland jutting out on the Maryland side above the Potomac, the seat of their future permanent institution.

Here a descendant of that Daniel Carroll who in the early days of the Colony had first settled and thriven at Upper Marlboro, who after complete training in the best schools of continental Europe, first as student and then as professor, was to become the Most Reverend John Carroll, first Archbishop of Baltimore and founder of Georgetown University, laid in the summer of 1788 the foundation of this institution.

It was only an academy and only a single building of not very large dimensions, "63 or 64 ft. by 50," but, "on this Academy," he states, "is built my

hope of permanency of our Holy Religion in the United States."[1]

It is said that the choice of the exact site of his seminary was prompted "to some extent by Mr. Alexander Doyle, a surveyor and architect who was then engaged in erecting Old Trinity Church on a knoll at Georgetown." West of it was a point jutting out into the Potomac, "finely elevated, free from malaria, and swept by every breeze from above or below." Doctor Carroll was fully justified in describing it as "one of the most lovely situations that the imagination can frame."

The institution prospered from the start and has steadily advanced from that time until the present, as was due to the wisdom of the superintendent who opened it to students of every religious profession and accorded to those who differed in religion from himself the liberty "to frequent the places of worship and instruction appointed by their parents."

The institution under the direction of its first president, the Rev. Robert Plunkett, who had been singled out by Bishop Carroll for that responsible post, opened its doors to students in September, 1791, one month before the first sale of lots in the new City of Washington. It is said that the first pupil who was entered on

[1] "History of Georgetown College," p. 11.

its rolls was William Gaston of North Carolina, who became later one of the most accomplished scholars, lawyers, and orators of his day—the friend and rival of both Clay and Webster.

By the end of the following year sixty-six pupils were entered on the rolls, most of whom found lodging in the town and many of whom subsequently became men of eminence.

Among the pioneer pupils of Georgetown were Augustin and Bushrod Washington, sons of Judge Bushrod Washington, whose relation to the institution led to a pleasant friendly association between the institution and General Washington. On his invitation a visit was paid by the faculty to him, "apparently at Mt. Vernon," and in due time the President returned the visit. It happened, however, that although his visit was expected and his reception had been duly prepared for, the exact time of his arrival was not known, and when he rode up to the single building of Georgetown College, he simply hitched his horse to the palings outside and entered the building, where he was welcomed by Professor Matthews, "and Robert Walsh, one of the young students, delivered a poetical address to the Father of his Country."

Georgetown, whose situation and advancement had

been one of the factors in determining the site of the federal district and city, not unnaturally expected to be a participator in the benefits which might arise therefrom, and doubtless, for a period, the little town lying upon the hills above the Potomac and stretching down to the riverside did derive certain benefits from the new movement, and in the future will probably again participate in the rewards of the capital city. But a long interval intervened in which Georgetown found its hopes dashed and itself regarded merely as a little Cinderella, left in the corner, while her larger sister flourished and disported herself in fine apparel. Her streets were cut through and graded, only to block the trade which she had formerly possessed and destroy the rural beauty which had formerly been one of her chief charms, without bringing to her any of the compensations which were gradually appearing as the dower of Washington.

The history of this little sister is itself an interesting one, particularly in that it is the older and was long the most aristocratic section of the national capital. When the Federal Government was first moved to the new territory, composed for the most part of old field and forest and swamp, Georgetown, though limited in size, was already the seat of a college and the home of cul-

ture, refinement, and wealth, and offered to the members of the Government who came with their families to this wilderness not only shelter, but an asylum where reasonable comfort could alone be found within the district. The town dated back nearly a hundred years, in some form. It was set off to Ninian Beall, out of Prince George's County by patent under the Great Seal of Maryland, issued November 18, 1703, calling for 795 acres, beginning at the mouth of Rock Creek where it joins the Potomac River. The name given to the place was, "The Rock of Dunbarton," which in itself has a romantic sound and at least indicates the feeling with which the Americans looked back to the parts of the Old Country from which they came. The town itself was called after that young Prince of the House of Hanover who is said to have been by far the best one of the Georges, and who at least had the virtue of personal courage, as is attested by the story that when his horse ran away with him at the battle of Sutfen, he sprang from his back, declaring that at least his own legs would not run away with him.

Georgetown became a city by act of the Maryland Assembly passed at the November session of the General Assembly in 1789, and soon gave itself the airs of a city, somewhat to its future distress.

While, on the Potomac side, grew up a flourishing town of considerable size, based on the volume of trade inevitable to so important a point as the meeting point of deep-water navigation with the lines of traffic with the West, on its hills and heights rose the mansions of a gentry who were able to maintain their position at least in the requisite manner of comfort and style. With the arrival of the new Government and the fact that they were forced to seek shelter in Georgetown, the fortunes and possibly the pride of the old settlement increased.

It was long, however, before changes came, sufficient to do away with the old customs. For example, the streets were long lighted by a few scattered and flickering lamps. The curfew was sounded at night with a horn and sent the slaves to their homes at a given hour, and, although modern progress in time supplanted this method by hanging a large triangle on the spire of the Church, which was struck at the curfew hour, when the triangle fell and was broken Georgetown returned to its original method of the horn and the watchman's call. This method of giving notice by means of a triangle was not confined to Georgetown, but was long used in Washington, as we shall find later.

CHAPTER VII

EARLY SOCIAL LIFE IN WASHINGTON

IT WAS not long after Washington became the seat of government that the social life there began to develop, from a very small beginning, along lines that make the social life of the capital quite distinctive in its way. Happily for us, we have pictures of this life from the earliest time, contained in letters and journals, mainly of clever women, who not only give us at first hand an account of the external life, which, indeed, is what they set out to do; but have afforded us glimpses, between the lines, of the very essence of that society which they picture with more formal intention.

The life under Mr. Adams's administration was, without doubt, more democratic externally than under Washington's. The New England Key was more democratic than the Virginia Key. Mr. Adams, standing in the fire line and passing buckets, and Mrs. Adams, drying clothes in the East Room of the President's

House, present more democratic pictures than General Washington with his personal impressiveness and his bay coach-horses, with his white charger, his imported saddle, and fine trappings.[1]

Following Mr. Adams's administration, the best pictures of the new administration (which constituted in some sort a change to an even greater simplicity than that of the life under the elder Adams) are given in the letters and records of Margaret Bayard Smith, whose husband, Samuel Harrison Smith, was one of the young men of talent discovered and brought to Washington by Mr. Jefferson. He established the first national newspaper ever printed in America, the famous *National Intelligencer*, of which it used to be said, later on, that if a man were found dead with a copy of the *National Intelligencer* in his pocket, it would be *prima facie* evidence that he was a gentleman.

As we are indebted to the second president, Mr. Adams, though indirectly through the pens of others, for the best picture of Washington City during his administration, so we are indirectly indebted to his successor, Mr. Jefferson, for the best picture of the capital,

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[1] Washington himself is said to have sprung from his horse at a fire in Alexandria and lent a hand, exclaiming to some around him, "Gentlemen, why are you idle?"

not only during his administration but those of several of the other presidents; for the pen which has given the most pleasing picture of Washington in Mr. Jefferson's time has also given us the life in the time of his successors.

Mr. Jefferson, who always had an eye for native ability, and who, as we have seen, picked L'Enfant, Thornton, and Latrobe from the throng of would-be engineers and architects who pressed for recognition when the capital was laid out, exercised his instinct in other directions with equal success. During the fierce contest which went on between the Federalists and the Republicans, he as leader of the latter had formed a fairly accurate gauge of the abilities of most of the men who espoused the two sides. It was a period of deep and often of bitter feeling, and every resource of intellect was called into play. Among the clever young men who attracted the attention of the Republican leader was a young writer and editor in Philadelphia by name Samuel Harrison Smith, the son of a man of position, Jonathan Bayard Smith, who had been a member of the Continental Congress and who had served with credit as a colonel in the Revolution. When Jefferson moved with the Government to the new capital, he invited his young friend and protégé to come

also and proposed to him that he set up a national newspaper. This the latter gladly did.[1]

At first the *National Intelligencer* was published only tri-weekly, at the rate of $5 per annum to those outside of the city, and $6 to those in the city, to whom it was delivered free of postage. From its first number, which appeared on October 31, 1800, it sounded no uncertain note. It stood for the Republic and Republicanism, which in the mind of its editor meant Mr. Jefferson. Its first issue contained a sort of prospectus setting forth its purposes and its policies. It apologizes for being nearly a month late in appearing, assigning as the reason "unavoidable, though unanticipated embarrassment" attending the removal of a printing-press. It states in explanation of this that the vessel which sailed from Philadelphia on September 20th, with the printing-press on board, did not arrive in Washington until October 25th, having been driven ashore by the violence of a storm.

As successful, however, as he was in all his affairs, the young Republican's most successful venture was un-

[1] Mr. Smith, after conducting this paper successfully for more than ten years, sold it to Mr. Joseph Gales, Jr., and took up the less arduous duties of the Commissioner of the Revenue, an office to which he was appointed by Mr. Madison. Later (1814) he was appointed Secretary of the Treasury *ad interim*, and yet later, having been president of the Bank of Washington, he became president of the Washington branch of the Bank of the United States.

dertaken when, on the eve of establishing the *National Intelligencer*, he returned to Philadelphia and married his cousin, Miss Margaret Bayard, a daughter of Colonel John Bayard, and first cousin of the first of the three distinguished Senators of that name.

To the clear eyes, social qualities, and easy pen of Margaret Bayard Smith, who at the age of twenty-two came to Washington in the fall of 1800 to preside over her young husband's modest home, we owe the most intimate and most complete picture that we have of any period of Washington life. She became a valued contributor to *Godey's Lady's Book* and other magazines; a novelist of some celebrity, and a writer of biographies and domestic sketches. But her really important work was the continued picture of Washington life which she drew in her notebooks and letters to her sister, covering a period of more than twoscore years. To these, which have been edited by Mr. Gaillard Hunt and published in a volume entitled, "The First Forty Years of Washington Society," we are indebted for a reflection of Washington life unapproached by any other works whatsoever.

It will be recalled that when John Adams was elected by the Federalists as Washington's successor in 1796, Jefferson became the Vice-President, having been

A picturesque view of the great building which not only symbolizes our nation, but is a memorial to Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Elliott and L'Enfant who put so much painstaking thought into its planning and erection.

beaten for President by only three electoral votes. In 1800 when they again ran against each other, Jefferson was elected over Adams by the Republicans, receiving 73 electoral votes to 65 received by Adams. The contest on both sides was understood to be decisive not only of the form but of the principles of the Government, and it was one of the most bitter ever waged in the country. To this was added a strong personal rivalry between the two leaders. So furious was the hostility between the two that the retiring President could not bend himself to see his successful competitor take his seat, but rode away to the north before Jefferson was inaugurated.

Among the questions which were to some extent involved in this contest was the future of the capital city. John Adams was, at best, but neutrally disposed toward it. To Jefferson it was an object of deep solicitude and much pride. He gave to it unremittingly his fostering care.

Many a day he was to be seen riding up and down, as Hines remembers him, a tall, well-proportioned man, very erect, with his hat tilted over his eyes, keenly watchful of all that related to this capital city. Many a night he pored over plans or added to his immense correspondence letters to superintendents or artists

upon the details of construction or embellishment of the white capitol rising on Capitol Hill. Said Hines in 1866:

> I have seen all the Presidents of the United States. . . . I have seen them frequently in and about the City; sometimes they would ride around the suburbs and in the country unattended by their attendants or escorts. Mr. Jefferson in particular was fond of being where any improvements were going on.

He then relates the incident already given of seeing Mr. Adams in the fire line in F Street when the War Office was on fire. He continues:

> Mr. Jefferson, who succeeded Mr. Adams as President, was a tall, well-proportioned man, six feet or upwards in height. He was generally seen on horseback . . . seldomly riding in his carriage. He usually wore a blue-cloth double-breasted coat, with gilded buttons, and I do not recollect ever having seen him with a round-breasted coat on, as he is represented in his bronze statue at the White House. In riding along he usually wore his hat nearly down over his eyes, a peculiarity I could never account for, unless it was because he sat so erect on his horse as to enable him to look straight forward.

But to return to Margaret Bayard Smith: from the natural pen of this clear-eyed reflector of the life about her we see, as in a magic mirror, Washington life through a period of years with all its varied circumstance, as

well private as official. She is entitled to give her own account of the way in which she and her husband came to make their home in Washington:

> During part of the time when Mr. Jefferson was President of the Philosophical Society (in Philadelphia) Mr. Smith was its secretary. A prize offered by the society for the best system of national education was gained by Mr. Smith. The merit of this essay first attracted the notice of Mr. Jefferson to the author; the personal acquaintance which then took place, led to a friendly intercourse which influenced the future destiny of my husband, as it was by Mr. Jefferson's advice, that he removed to Washington and established the *National Intelligencer*. Esteem for the talents and character of the editor first won Mr. Jefferson's regard, a regard which lasted to the end of his life and was a thousand times evinced by acts of personal kindness and confidence.

The young couple, on their arrival in Washington to undertake the novel experiment of a national journal, settled themselves in a modest country home on the hills about the present Soldiers' Home, where they commanded "a most beautiful view of the Eastern Branch." Here, surrounded by kind and agreeable neighbours who were delighted to take into their circle so lively and cultivated a pair, they participated in the pleasant society which was already forming in Washington and which was promptly to assume an individual stamp.

The reminiscences published begin at so early a period of their domestic life that they start with the picture of one of the neighbouring families coming over to pass an agreeable afternoon and being entertained in the young hostess's chamber, which we are assured "looked very smart," and being treated to her wedding-cake.

We have a picture of the pleasant, cordial, simple life which used to exist in the South and which to some extent still survives there, in which kindly neighbours were wont to give substantial tokens of their friendliness by sending or taking with them on their visits presents of dainties from their own tables, or even more substantial tokens of their good will from their gardens and pantries.

One day we find "Mrs. B——" bringing over with her "a large basket of sweet potatoes and some fine cabbage"; on another, we find Mrs. Law, who, by the way, was a granddaughter of Mrs. Washington, and a lady of wealth and the highest social position, meeting her young visitors at the front door, taking each by the hand and leading them to the parlour and then telling them that she "had a fine roast turkey, and they must stay and eat of it." We are given the privilege of a yet further glimpse into this simple life. We are allowed to participate in the hostess's pride when she says,

"Come, you are young housekeepers—come and look at my kitchen," as we are allowed to participate in the young visitor's wonder over "a contrivance more convenient" than any she had ever heard of: a thing called "a ranger," now reduced to "range," which she describes with unfeigned wonder, adding, for future reference, "that they are to be had at Baltimore."

We may go even further and accompany the young hostess ourselves when, leaving the gentlemen in the parlour, she took the young lady "up-stairs where she was putting up curtains" and where her visitor assisted her, going from room to room and chatting "like old acquaintances"; playing with the hostess's little girl and her doll and establishing with her immediately a delightful relation in which the sweet little creature calls the visitor "Aunt" and the latter calls her "My Mary Anne."

When they go down to dinner they find "four or five gentlemen who had accidentally come in," and soon afterward another family joins them, Mr. Peter and Mr. Lewis, the hostess's two brothers-in-law being of the party. No wonder that our historian tells us that "vivacity and good humour prevailed and our party was fifty times more agreeable than if we had met by previous invitation"; for she adds, "I have never seen

any one so destitute of all ceremony as this sweet woman." "After dinner," to continue this charming narrative, "the gentlemen all dispersed," and our narrator was about leaving with her husband when "Mrs. T——," one of the other guests, told her that if she would stay to tea she would take her home in the carriage. She says:

> I agreed. Mrs. L—— amused herself with a magazine and left us to amuse ourselves as we chose. I cut out and fitted a muslin frock for my niece *à la mode*, Mary Anne, while she played at my side and the Tingey ladies talked with me.
>
> About an hour after dinner, before the table was removed, a servant brought in a waiter of Shusheng tea and a few biscuits. When we parted I had two sweet kisses from Mrs. Law, with an invitation frequently to repeat my visit and a promise of soon seeing me.

In the same letter to her sisters which was quoted before, she tells them how "Mrs. T——" called for her in fulfilment of her promise to accompany her to "G—— town," where after shopping they drove to Mrs. Bell's, where as usual she met a most affectionate welcome. Not only was a substantial lunch set before them, but when she came away her pockets were "loaded with cake and apples," and a bottle of milk, one of yeast, and a bundle of hops were put into the carriage for her,

"with an injunction to apply for more when those were gone."

On Sunday Mrs. Otis sends her carriage for the young couple and they go to church, "where a good sermon was preached to a small but respectable congrate," and "after church Captain T——, Dr. May, and Mrs. Foster came home with us and I received them *sans ceremonie* in my chamber."

She speaks also of her pleasure and satisfaction that her servant, however stupid, makes such a nice kind of biscuit and is always delighted when she asks her to make them, and how another has made her, that evening, "some very good short-cakes." She adds in parentheses "what strange information to send two hundred miles!" Yet this information has come down more than one hundred years and will still go on, giving possibly as important and certainly as interesting information as though she had described the movements of Presidents and Cabinets.

But we have from this facile pen not only these delightful naïve bits of the private life of the national capital: we have touches of the official life as well. In the very outset she gives us a little sketch, more valuable than many chapters of a formal biography, of one who, although still occupying only the secondary

position of Vice-President, was already the most important person in the new capital and in the country, a position which he was to continue to hold for a long time. To quote her own account, she says:

In December, 1800, a few days after the Congress had met for the first time in our new Metropolis I was one morning sitting alone in the parlor, when the servant opened the door and showed in a gentleman who wished to see my husband. The usual frankness and care with which I met strangers, were somewhat checked by the reserved and dignified air of the present visitor; but the chilled feeling was only momentary, for after taking the chair, which I offered him, in a free and easy manner, and carelessly throwing his arm on the table near which he sat, he turned towards me with a countenance beaming with an expression of benevolence and, with a manner and voice almost femininely soft and gentle, entered into conversation on the commonplace topics of the day, from which, before I was conscious of it, he had drawn me into observations of a more personal and interesting nature. I know not how it was, but there was something in his manner, his countenance and voice that at once unlocked my heart, and in answer to casual inquiries concerning our situation in our new home, as he called it, I found myself telling him frankly what I liked and what I disliked in our present circumstances and abode. I knew not who he was, but the interest with which he listened to my artless details, induced the idea he was some intimate acquaintance or friend of Mr. Smith and put me perfectly at my ease; in truth so kind and conciliating were his looks and manners that I forgot that he was a friend not my own, until on the opening of the

door, Mr. Smith entered and introduced the stranger to me as Mr. Jefferson.

I felt my cheeks burn and my heart throb, and not a word more could I speak while he remained. Nay, such was my embarrassment I could scarcely listen to the conversation carried on between him and my husband. For several years he had been to me an object of peculiar interest. In fact my destiny, for on his success in the pending presidential election, or rather the success of the democratic party (their interests were identical) my condition in life, my union with the man I loved, depended. In addition to this personal interest, I had long participated in my husband's political sentiments and anxieties and looked upon Mr. Jefferson as the corner stone on which the edifice of republican liberty was to rest, looked upon him as the champion of human rights, the reformer of abuses, the head of the republican party, which must rise or fall with him, and on the triumph of the republican party I devoutly believed the security and welfare of my country depended. Notwithstanding those exalted views of Mr. Jefferson as a political character, and ardently eager as I was for his success, I retained my previously conceived ideas of the coarseness and vulgarity of his appearance and manners and therefore was equally awed and surprised, on discovering the stranger whose deportment was so dignified and gentlemanly, whose language was so refined, whose voice was so gentle, whose countenance was so benignant, to be no other than Thomas Jefferson. How instantaneously were all these preconceived prejudices dissipated, and in proportion to their strength, was the reaction that took place in my opinions and sentiments. I felt that I had been the victim of prejudice, that I had been unjust. The revolution of feeling was complete and from that moment my heart warmed to him with the most

affectionate interest and I implicitly believed all that his friends and my husband believed and which the after experience of many years confirmed. Yes, not only was he a great, but a truly good man. . . .

After the affair of business was settled, the conversation became general and Mr. Jefferson several times addressed himself to me; but although his manner was unchanged, my feelings were, and I could not recover sufficient ease to join in the conversation. He shook hands cordially with us both when he departed, and in a manner which said as plain as words could do, "I am your friend."

This visit of Mr. Jefferson's, which, it appears, was for the purpose of making arrangements with the husband of Mrs. Smith for the publication of his manual of Congress, now known as *Jefferson's Manual*, made such an indelible impression on the lady that from that time, from having been to some extent in sympathy with the views of her father, a strong Federalist, she became one of Mr. Jefferson's most ardent admirers and advocates.

Years afterward she wrote in her notebook:

"And is this," said I, after my first interview with Mr. Jefferson, "the violent democrat, the vulgar demagogue, the bold atheist and profligate man I have so often heard denounced by the federalists? Can this man so meek and mild, yet dignified in his manners, with a voice so soft and low, with a countenance so benignant and intelligent, can he be the daring leader of a faction, that disturber of the peace, that enemy of all rank and order?"

She records that her husband indeed (himself a democrat) had given her a very definite description of Mr. Jefferson, admits she had attributed his favourable opinion in a great measure to his political feelings, "which led him to support and exalt the party to which he belonged, especially its popular and almost idolized leader." And she admits that thus "the virulence of party spirit was somewhat neutralized" and that she even entertained toward him the most kindly disposition; but frankly states that notwithstanding this, she did believe

> that he was an ambitious and violent demagogue, coarse and vulgar in his manners, awkward and rude in his appearance, for such had the public journals and private conversations of the federal party represented him to be.

At the time of this visit Mr. Jefferson was only Vice-President, but was in nomination for the Presidency, and it appears that he had been so fortunate as to secure accommodations, in common with a number of other members of the House, at one of the few good boarding houses in the embryo city. This boarding house, known as Conrad's boarding house, had, it seems, been built originally by Mr. Law as his private residence, but "on discovering the insufficiency of accommodation"

he gave it up to Conrad for a private boarding house and he himself removed to "a very inconvenient dwelling on Greenleaf Point, almost two miles distant from the Capitol," separated from the most inhabited part of the city by fields and waste grounds, broken up by deep gulleys and ravines, over which there was occasionally a passable road.

Here it seems that Mr. Law in February, 1801, during an exciting contest in the House of Representatives between Mr. Jefferson and Colonel Burr for the Presidency, gave a ball one night which might have had serious consequences. As is known the vote stood long at a tie and Mr. Bayard of Delaware, whose blank ballot subsequently decided the election, "went with other influential and leading members" to Mr. Law's ball. The night proving dark and rainy, on their attempt to return home "the coachman lost his way and till daybreak was driving about this waste and broken ground" with Mr. Bayard and other members of Congress, whose lives were afterward believed, certainly by Mrs. Smith, to have been in the utmost peril.

CHAPTER VIII

WASHINGTON UNDER JEFFERSON'S ADMINISTRATION

THE election of Jefferson over Burr was without doubt one of the great crises through which Washington City in common with the rest of the country passed. Although Mr. Jefferson and Colonel Burr had received in the popular election precisely the same number of electoral votes, 73, it was well known then, as it is now, that the popular votes were cast for Mr. Jefferson as President and for Colonel Burr as Vice-President. The electoral vote between them being a tie, the choice was by the Constitution thrown into the House of Representatives, whereupon the Federal party determined if possible to defeat Jefferson and bent all their energies to this end. It was recognized throughout the country that on the issue hung certainly the fate of both parties and possibly the fate of the Republic.

Jefferson, it seems, recognized the technical power of the House of Representatives to elect Burr, should a majority decide to do so; however, he resented such a

malfeasance in their high function. One plan proposed, however, was to defeat him and Burr and elect a new man altogether. This Jefferson regarded as an absolute usurpation of power, destructive to the Government, and the people would undoubtedly agree with him. Great numbers thronged into the city, clamorous against any attempted usurpation, and troops were quietly mobilized in Virginia, in Pennsylvania, and possibly in other states to meet the crisis which was at hand.

When the two bodies of Congress met, the Senators as witnesses, the Representatives as electors, the sitting was held with closed doors and lasted without a break for more than thirty hours. No one left the House during its session. Beds and food were sent in for the accommodation of such as were unable to endure so protracted a session. One member (Joseph Hopper Nicholson, of Maryland) although seriously ill, was carried through the snowstorm some two miles to the capitol from his lodgings and wrote his ballot, and laid in an adjoining room where he was aroused by his wife as each ballot was taken to write his name.

Finally James A. Bayard of Delaware, a Federalist, put in a blank ballot and Mr. Jefferson was elected by one vote. When the news went forth that the will of the people had been carried out and the Government of the

people had been saved, "the assembled crowds without the Capitol" (to quote Mrs. Smith) "rent the air with their acclamations and gratulations and the Conspirators, as they were called, hurried to their lodgings to escape from the just indignation of their fellow citizens."

If, however, one party and part of Washington rejoiced, the other was correspondingly cast down; for the change of administration meant a great change in the life of Washington.

So great was the feeling between the two parties that Mr. Adams declined to remain in Washington to see his successor inaugurated, and it is said that, mounting his horse, he rode away to Massachusetts before Mr. Jefferson took the oath of office. It was to this occasion of Mr. Jefferson's first inauguration that the well-known story relates, which has given its name to Jeffersonian simplicity, based on the legend that Mr. Jefferson rode on horseback to the capitol as he had been wont to do as a private citizen, and tying his horse to some palings, entered and took the oath of office. This particular story has no foundation other than the fact that Mr. Jefferson both before and after his inauguration appears to have ridden frequently to the capitol, where he hitched his horse while he walked around inspecting the work which was going on

there. In truth, however, the actual facts were quite as consonant with democratic simplicity as is this apocryphal story.

Mr. Jefferson, as stated, lived at the Conrad boarding house, at the southern brow of Capitol Hill, "about 200 paces from the Capitol, in New Jersey Avenue, leading from thence to the Eastern Branch." This house of entertainment, which was advertised as having "one horse for stage-passengers and the other for boarders," and as having stabling for 60 horses, he selected, according to Mrs. Smith, partly from his love of nature and his enjoyment of the beautiful and extensive prospect of woods and grass and water, of plain and forest-clad hill, which spread before him to the southward. Mrs. Smith says:

> Here he had a separate drawing-room for the reception of his visitors; in all other respects he lived with perfect equality with his fellow boarders and ate at a common table. Even here, so far from taking precedence of the other members of Congress, he always placed himself at the lowest end of the table. Mrs. Brown, the wife of the Senator from Kentucky, suggested that a seat should be offered him at the upper end, near the fire, if not on account of his rank as Vice-President, at least as the oldest man in the company. But the idea was rejected by his democratic friends, and he occupied during the whole winter the lowest and coldest seat at a long table at which a company of more than thirty sat down.

One of the gates which make beautiful and impressive the entrance to the Capitol.

This was certainly democratic simplicity, but as hard as it is to credit it, Mrs. Smith's story proceeds:

Even on the day of his inauguration when he entered the dining hall no other seat was offered him by the gentlemen. Mrs. Brown from an impulse, which she said she could not resist, offered him a seat, but he smilingly declined it, and took his usual place at the bottom of the table. She said that she felt indignant and for a moment almost hated the levelling principle of democracy, though her husband was a zealous democrat. Certainly, this was carrying equality too far; there is no incompatibility between politeness and republicanism; grace can not weaken and rudeness can not strengthen a good cause; but democracy is more jealous of power and privilege than even despotism.

It was on this morning from this boarding house where he had sat as Vice-President at the bottom of the table that Thomas Jefferson, at the head of a small procession, walked to the capitol and took the oath of office in the old Senate chamber as President of the United States. Nothing could add to that simplicity as nothing could add to that dignity.

At this time the only place for public worship in our new City was a small, a very small frame building at the bottom of Capitol Hill [near the present Peace Monument]. It had been a tobacco warehouse belonging to Daniel Carroll [of Duddington Manor] and was purchased by a few Episcopalians for a mere trifle and fitted up as a church in the plainest and rudest manner. During the first

winter, Mr. Jefferson regularly attended service on the Sabbath day in the humble church. The congregation seldom exceeded fifty or sixty, but generally consisted of a score of hearers. He could have had no motive for this regular attendance, but that of respect for public worship, choice of place or preacher he had not, as this, with the exception of a little Catholic chapel, was the only church in the city. The custom of preaching in the Hall of the House of Representatives had not then been attempted, though after it was established Mr. Jefferson, during the whole administration, was a regular attendant.

I have called these Sunday assemblies in the capitol, a congregation, but the almost exclusive appropriation of that word to religious assemblies, prevents its being a descriptive term as applied in the present case, since the gay company who thronged the H. of R. looked very little like a religious assembly. The occasion presented for display not only a novel, but a favorable one for the youth, beauty and fashion of the city, Georgetown and environs. The members of Congress gladly gave up their seats for such fair auditors, and either lounged in the lobbies or stood by the ladies of their acquaintance. This Sabbath-day resort became so fashionable, that the floor of the House offered insufficient space, the platform behind the Speaker's chair and every spot where a chair could be wedged in was crowded with ladies in their gayest costume and their attendant beaux, who led them to their seats with the same gallantry as is exhibited in a ball-room. Smiles, nods, whispers, nay sometimes tittering marked their recognition of each other and beguiled the tedium of the service. Often, when cold, a lady would leave her seat and led by her attending beau would make her way through the crowd to one of the fireplaces where she could laugh and talk at her ease. One of the officers of

the House followed by his attendant with a great bag over his shoulder, precisely at 12 o'clock, would make his way through the hall to the depository of letters to put them in the mail bag, which sometimes had a most ludicrous effect, and always diverted attention from the preacher. The music was as little in union with the devotional feelings as was the place. The Marine Band were the performers. Their scarlet uniform, their various instruments, made quite a dazzling appearance in the gallery. The marches they played were good and inspiring, but in their attempts to accompany the psalm-singing of the congregation, they completely failed, and after a while the practice was discontinued, it was too ridiculous.

Not only the chaplains, but the most distinguished clergymen who visited the city, preached in the capitol. I remember hearing Mr. E. Everett, afterwards a member of the Congress, deliver an eloquent and flowery discourse, to a most thronged and admiring audience. But as a political orator he afterwards became far more eloquent and admired. Preachers of every sect and denomination of Christians were there admitted—Catholics, Unitarians, Quakers, with every intervening diversity of sect. Even women were allowed to display their pulpit eloquence in this National Hall. . . . As Congress is composed of Christians of every persuasion, each denomination in its turn has furnished chaplains to the two houses of Congress, who preach alternately in the Hall of Representatives. Some opposition was made to both a Roman Catholic and a Unitarian, but did not succeed. Clergymen who during the session of Congress visited the city, were invited by the chaplains to preach; those of distinguished reputation attracted crowded audiences and were evidently gratified by having such an opportunity for the exercise of their talents and their zeal. The ad-

mission of female preachers has been justly reprobated: Curiosity rather than piety attracted throngs on such occasions. The levity which characterized the Sabbath-day assemblies in the capitol in former years, has long yielded to a more decorous and reverent demeanor. The attendance of the Marine Band was soon discontinued, and various regulations made, which have secured a serious and uninterrupted service of the day.

For several years after the seat of government was fixed at Washington, there were but two small churches, the Roman Catholic chapel in F Street, then a little frame building, and the Episcopalian church at the foot of Capitol Hill; both very small and very mean frame buildings. Now, in 1837, there are twenty-two churches of brick or stone. Sunday used to be the universal day for visits and entertainments. Only a few, very few of the gayest citizens now, either pay or receive visits. There was one sermon delivered by Mr. Breckenridge at the commencement of the War that was deemed quite prophetic—whether inspired or not, his predictions were certainly and accurately fulfilled. This pious and reverend preacher, made up in zeal and fidelity, what he lacked in natural talents or acquired knowledge, and in the plainest and boldest language of reprehension addressed the members of Congress and officers of the government present on that occasion. The subject of his discourse was the observance of the Sabbath. After enlarging on its prescribed duties, he vehemently declaimed on the neglect of those duties, particularly of the higher classes and in this city, more especially of persons connected with the government. He unshrinkingly taxed those then listening to him, with a desecration of the holy day, by their devoting it to amusement—to visiting and parties, emphatically condemning the dinner parties given at the White House, then addressing himself to the members

of Congress, accused them of violating the holy day, by laws they had made, particularly carrying the mail on the Sabbath; he enumerated the men and horses employed for this purpose through the union and went into details striking and impressive.

"It is not the people who will suffer for these enormities," said he, "you, the law-givers, who are the cause of this crime will in your public capacity suffer for it. Yes, it is the government that will be punished, and as with Nineveh of old, it will not be the habitations of the people, but your temples and your palaces that will be burned to the ground; for it is by fire that this sin has usually been punished." He then gave many instances from scripture history in which destruction by fire of cities, dwellings and persons, had been the consequence of violating the fourth commandment.

At the time that this sermon was preached, the most remote apprehension did not exist of a British Army ever reaching Washington, although War was pending. His predictions were verified. The Capitol, the President's House, and every building belonging to the government were destroyed by fire. Mrs. Madison told me that on her return to the city, after the British had left it, she was standing one day at her sister's door, for she had no house of her own, but until one was provided by the public, resided with her sister, and while there, looking on the devastation spreading round her, saw Mr. Breckenridge passing along, she called to him and said, "I little thought, Sir, when I heard that threatening sermon of yours, that its denunciation would be so soon realized." "Oh! Madam," he replied. "I trust that this chastening of the Lord may not be in vain."

I am afraid that the good man's hopes were never realized, for as far as I can recollect, there was not for many, many years afterwards a change in the observance of the Sabbath.

Sir Augustus Foster, Secretary of the British Legation during Mr. Jefferson's administration, makes a reference to the same curious religious custom. Speaking of the amusements of the time, he says:

> Cards were a great resource of an evening, and gaming was all the fashion, at Brag, especially, for the men who frequented Society were chiefly from Virginia or the Western States, and were very fond of this the most gambling of all games. Loo was the innocent diversion of the ladies.

He then adds:

> Church service can certainly never be called an amusement; but from the variety of persons who were allowed to preach in the House of Representatives there doubtless was some alloy of curiosity in the motives which led one to go there. Though the regular chaplain was a Presbyterian, sometimes a Methodist, a Minister of the Church of England, or a Quaker and sometimes even a woman took the Speaker's chair; and I do not think that there was much devotion among the majority.

Washington, although to eyes accustomed to greater things only "a huddle of huts," with two great public buildings, yet unfinished, "rising on eminences a mile distant from each other," was, nevertheless, now beginning with the aid of Georgetown to furnish the beginnings of a gay and agreeable social life.

No sooner had Jefferson become President than he took steps to do away with the merely formal and

ceremonious attitude of the Administration toward social life. He substituted for the formal receptions which had hitherto signalized the social functions of the Administration, an open, easy, and, it is said, lavish hospitality. The simplicity of Democracy supplanted the formality of Federalism at the White House no less than at the Capitol. Much sneering was done at the vulgarity of the new Democracy, but it is difficult to associate so unpleasant a term with the easy graciousness of him whose picture has been given so convincingly by the wife of the young editor of the *National Intelligencer*.

"The jests of the great," says the Vicar of Wakefield, "are always amusing." Of all places in the world no one is more susceptible to the influences of the Administration than Washington. It possesses a capacity for adaptation which even the hard-worked chameleon might envy. In good faith and without impropriety, for it is not meant that this extends to matters of principle, it reflects the most delicate tints of the ruling Administration. Certainly this appears to have been the case during the period at which this history has now arrived. The change in the attitude of the Administration toward social life appears to have been promptly reflected in the increased sociability throughout the new capital, and the change appears

to have extended to distant parts, for many visitors now began to flock to the new centre.

The distinctive form of Washington society in this period was given to it in part by the society leaders, who were to a considerable extent Southern, and held Southern views of hospitality, but Mr. Jefferson unquestionably placed on it his own stamp of mingled simplicity and dignity. He was charged with being a radical and a leveller, if not a vulgarian; as to the last, as stated, the matter may be left to Mrs. Smith and to history; as to the others, he was unquestionably a democrat in principle and in practice, however aristocratic his personal address may have been. When he became President, James Madison became his Secretary of State, Albert Gallatin took the portfolio of the Treasury, and General Dearborn was made Secretary of War.

Among those who by natural right became the leaders of the social life in the national capital, a position which she long retained, and indeed, in some sort retains traditionally to this day, was Mistress Dolly Madison, the wife of the Secretary of State. Born in Hanover County, Virginia, where she spent her childhood, she moved later to Philadelphia with her family, where she was reared among the Society of Friends to which her family belonged. Even then, as she declared

years later, she pined for gay society. She early married Mr. Todd, but was left a widow at the age of twenty-two through the yellow fever scourge which swept Philadelphia in 1792. After a brief interval she attracted the attention of "the great little Madison," as she herself calls him in the letter announcing that he was to be brought by Aaron Burr to see her that evening. He was twenty years her senior and was already one of the noted men of the country, but as the attraction was mutual, they were married in September, 1794, at her sister's home in Harewood in Virginia.

From the time that Madison entered the Cabinet of Jefferson, his home with its charming hostess became one of the chief social centres of Washington. Jefferson was a widower, and his friendship for his Secretary of State soon extended to Mrs. Madison. He often called on her for assistance in his social duties.

One of his invitations, dated May 27, 1801, runs:

> Thomas Jefferson begs that either Mrs. Madison or Miss Payne, will be so good as to dine with him to-day to take care of female friends expected.

Another of June 4th, a few days later, says:

> Thomas Jefferson was much disappointed at breakfast this morning, not having until then known of the departure of Mr. and

Mrs. Madison and Miss Payne; he hopes that they will come and dine to-day with the Miss Butters, who were assured they would meet him here, and to-morrow with Mrs. Gallatin and Mrs. Mason. Affectionate salutations.

It was doubtless with the intention to express his friendship no less than his democracy that the President thus styled himself without title of any kind to his intimates.

When it came, however, to official matters, no one who ever held the Presidency ever stood more stoutly for its proper prerogative. It is known that he refused to obey a writ of *subpoena duces tecum* issued by the Chief Justice in the Burr case, a precedent which has been followed ever since. But he issued a set of rules to be observed in official and semi-official social functions where diplomats and officials were concerned. They sound refreshing to civilian ears in this day when officials of whatever grade and officials' wives are eager to assert their claims to precedence on every occasion.

They are as follows:

Canons of Etiquette to be Observed by the Executive. By President Jefferson

1st. Foreign Ministers arriving at the seat of Government pay the first visit to the Ministers of the Nation, which is returned; and so likewise on subsequent occasions of reassembling after a recess.

2d. The families of Foreign Ministers receive the first visit from those of the National Ministers, as from all other residents, and as all strangers, foreign and domestic, do from all residents of the place.

3d. After the first visit the character of stranger ceases.

4th. Among the members of the Diplomatic Corps, the Executive Government, in its own principles of National and of personal equality, considers every minister the representative of his Nation, and equal to every other without distinction of grade.

5th. No titles being admitted here, those of foreigners give no precedence.

6th. Our Ministers to foreign Nations are as private citizens while here.

7th. At any public ceremony to which the Government invites the presence of the Foreign Ministers and their families, no precedence or privilege will be given them other than the provision of a convenient seat or station with any other stranger invited, and with the families of the National Ministers.

8th. At dinners, in public or private, and on all other occasions of social intercourse, a perfect equality exists between the persons composing the company, whether foreign or domestic, titled or untitled, in or out of office.

9th. To give force to the principle of equality, or *pêle mêle*, and prevent the growth of precedence out of courtesy, the members of the Executive at their own houses, will adhere to the ancient usage of their ancestors—gentlemen *en masse*, giving place to the ladies *en masse*.

10th. The President of the United States receives visits; but does not return them.

11th. The family of the President receives the first visit and returns it.

12th. The President and his family take precedence everywhere, in public, or in private.

13th. The President when in any State receives the first visit from the Governor and returns it.

14th. The Governor in his State receives the first visit from a Foreign Minister.

But not only did Mr. Jefferson ordain his Canons of Etiquette, he observed them as well. Having no lady at the head of his establishment, except on the rare occasions when his married daughter, Mrs. Randolph, visited him, he put forward the charming young wife of his Secretary of State, whom he always placed at the head of his table. The first time this occurred, it appeared to have occasioned some stir. According to Mrs. Madison it was a dinner at the White House at which a number of diplomats were present. When dinner was announced, the President, to her surprise, offered her his arm. Thinking that there was a mistake, as Mr. Merry, the British Minister, and his wife were present, she demurred and whispered to him, "Take Mrs. Merry." The President, however, knew what he wished. He took Mrs. Madison in and placed her at the head of his table. It appears that Mrs. Merry was so incensed that a complaint was made by them to the British Government, which together with

some correspondence with Colonel Burr, relating to England's taking part in the latter's scheme of separating the Southwest from the Union, only resulted in Mr. Merry's being recalled. Perhaps this incident accounts for the British Minister's incredible account of Mr. Jefferson on the occasion of his first presentation to him. He declares that he was taken through narrow passages and was finally "introduced to a man as the President of the United States not merely in an undress, but actually standing in slippers down at the heels, and pantaloons, coat, and underclothes indicative of utter slovenliness and indifference to appearance, but in a state of negligence actually studied." In any event he complained of what he regarded as a premeditated insult, and having entered into correspondence with the "arch plotter" Burr, he was promptly recalled by his Government.

It was natural that from this time, by virtue of her personal accomplishments as a hostess, as well as her official position, Mrs. Madison, still wearing her dainty little Quaker cap, should become one of the leaders of Washington society. We find her mentioned with enthusiasm by Mrs. Smith in her pictures of Washington life, and with admiration by others. Her "Dove Parties," where she entertained the wives and daugh-

ters of cabinet ministers and diplomats, while the gentlemen were more formally engaged, became celebrated.

The charms of Washington society, even in this inchoate stage, became so renowned that to share in them a wife of one Senator and a daughter of another rode on horseback over one thousand miles to spend the winter in the capital.

The Diplomatic Corps were now beginning to occupy a position of much prominence. Possessed of more means than most private individuals, however well off the latter might be, and familiar with the great world, they were able to entertain liberally, and naturally attracted the social element of the new capital. They occupied some of the fine mansions on the heights of Georgetown, which, with their beautiful grounds, lent themselves readily to the entertainments in vogue. Georgetown, though numbering only some 6,000 inhabitants, was far more attractive than the new city, which was spoken of by a critic as "a huddle of booths, taverns, and gambling houses, set around a political race-course."

Sir Augustus Foster, who in 1805 was one of Merry's attachés, wrote later:

There was no lack of handsome ladies for the balls of Georgetown, drawn from the families of the members and others who come for the season. I never saw prettier, more lovely, or better-

tempered girls anywhere—mostly from Virginia and Maryland. As there are but few of them, however, in proportion to the great number of men who frequent places of amusement, it is one of the most marrying places on the whole continent: a truth which was beginning to be found out and became by and by the cause of vast numbers flocking thither, all around from the four points of the compass.

Here, indeed, began the international matches which since that time have held so conspicuous a place in the social relations of the country.

The young Englishman now begins to grow critical:

Maugre the march of intellect, so much vaunted in the present century, the literary education of these ladies is far from being worthy the age of knowledge and conversation is apt to flag, though a seat by the ladies is much coveted.

Dancing and music served to eke out the time, but one got to be heartily sick of hearing the same song everywhere, even when it was "Just Like Love is Yonder Rose."

Among those who secured an American wife and afterward played, like the British Minister, a part in the social history of Washington, and aspired to play a part in the political history of the country as well, was the Spanish Minister, the Marquis d'Yrujo, who married Miss Sally McKean, the daughter of Governor McKean

of Pennsylvania, an intimate friend of Mrs. Madison and her younger sister, and one who contributed by her beauty and gayety to the charm of society in the newly established capital as she had done in the older capital of Philadelphia. Her letters to Mrs. Madison's sister contained a delightful picture of the fashions of the end of the century, and give a racy account, as well, of the diplomatic circle of the time in which she was to be ensnared. She tells of the "charming Chevalier, the Divine Santana, the Jolly Viar, the witty and agreeable Fatio, the black-eyed Lord Henry, the soft, love-making Count, the giggling foolish ——, and sometimes the modest, good Maclare," who was at her house every day.

The Marquis d'Yrujo, who was so fortunate as to capture the vivacious friend of Mrs. Madison, not content with this victory, undertook like his colleague to begin an intrigue with Burr, and was indiscreet enough to attempt to induce a Philadelphia editor to print in his paper an article criticizing the administration and taking the Spanish side of the Boundary Question between Spain and the United States. A demand for his recall was promptly made by Mr. Madison, the Secretary of State, but upon an appeal from Madrid, it was arranged that the Spanish Minister should be allowed to leave Washington quietly as though he were merely

going home on a visit. D'Yrujo, preferred to remain until the Spanish Question should have been decided by the Congress which then had it under consideration, and when he was notified by the Secretary of State that his presence was displeasing to the President, he replied, in a manner that would have done justice to Genet, that he would stay in Washington as long as he pleased. On this John Quincy Adams promptly introduced in the Senate a bill empowering the President to arrest any Minister remaining after his recall, after a reasonable notice to him to leave. In this state of the case the Spanish Government sent a peremptory demand to d'Yrujo to return home, which he reluctantly did.

Another member of the Diplomatic Corps, who then graced Washington, was the French Minister, Turreau de Gerrambouville, who attained some celebrity from a different cause. He had served in America during the Revolution under Rochambeau, and was naturally *persona grata* to our people. "Of obscure birth, but handsome and clever, he made his way up." During the Reign of Terror he had come within an ace of losing his head and owed his life to the cleverness of a servant girl employed about the prison who took a fancy to the handsome soldier and rubbed out the red mark on his

door placed there by the officials as a guide to the guillotiners. He married the girl who saved his life, and rose to become an aide to Napoleon, and eventually to be sent as Minister to Washington. Here he fell out with his wife, whom Mrs. Madison speaks of as "an amiable, sensible woman," and it was said that he whipped her and abused her dreadfully. This was rather too much for Washington and he was eventually recalled. On his return home, like other gentlemen who had undergone some disquieting experiences, he indulged himself in acrid criticism of this country, which he had "studied for eight years without being able to comprehend."

One of the notable society events of this administration was the marriage of Marcia Burns, the handsome daughter and only child of "obstinate Mr. Burns" who lived in the little dormer-windowed farmhouse among the trees near the foot of Seventeenth Street, where later the Van Ness Mansion stood for so long and where now stands the beautiful Pan-American Building If, however, his home was lowly, David Burns's property extended over a considerable part of the now growing capital and was increasing in value by bounds. When he died he left his estate to his only child, Marcia, who had through the friendship of Luther Martin, the brilliant Maryland lawyer, been received in his family and

educated with his daughters. When she returned to the moss-covered Burns cottage, she was regarded as both a beauty and an heiress, and her home, as simple as it was in appearance, soon became a mecca for many of the young Congressmen, who admired the young lady none the less for her father's ducats. Among these, the successful competitor for her hand was Mr. John P. Van Ness, a member of Congress from New York, "rich, handsome, well-bred, and well-read." Their marriage took place in 1802 and soon there arose near the modest cottage of old David Burns one of the most notable mansions that Washington has ever had in it. It was designed by Latrobe, and was finished in the finest method of a time when architects and artists worked hand in hand, and was long the seat of hospitality and refinement, distinguished even in Washington. Mr. Van Ness rose to be one of the most esteemed and distinguished citizens of Washington.

When the daughter of the house died in 1822, Mrs. Van Ness forsook society and went into seclusion and, as was said, in fulfilment of a vow, erected an orphan asylum and devoted the remainder of her life to works of charity. At her death she was interred with public honours in what was known as the famous Van Ness mausoleum, which once stood on F Street, but a number

of years ago was removed to Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown. After the death of the original owners of the Van Ness Mansion, it passed into the possession of another celebrated man, Mr. Thomas Green, of whom many quaint stories of prodigal entertainment were to be told.

One tradition was that in this mansion a part of the plot relating to the assassination of Lincoln and his Cabinet was discussed. The tale, however, appears to have been absolutely manufactured, without having the least foundation whatsoever, except that Mr. Green and his family were Southern sympathizers. The mansion years ago, after standing long unoccupied, gave way before the march of progress and nothing remains of it now save this tradition.

THE END

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